

THE *Blue*
Stage Condemn'd,



A N D

The Encouragement given to the Immoralities and Profaneness of the Theatre, by the English Schools, Universities and Pulpits, *Censur'd.*

The Arguments of all the Authors that have Writ in Defence of the Stage against Mr. Collier, *Consider'd.*

The Sense of the Fathers, Councils, Antient Philosophers and Poets, and of the Greek and Roman States, and of the First Christian Emperors concerning the DRAMA, *Faithfully Deliver'd.*

Together with

The Censure of the English State and of several Antient and Modern Divines of the Church of England upon the STAGE.

A L S O

Remarks on diverse late Plays, as also on those presented by the two Universities to King Charles I.

The Second Edition.

LONDON: Printed, and Sold by B. Bragge, at the Blue Ball in Ave-Mary-Lane. 1706.



To the Right Honourable the
Lords and Commons of
ENGLAND, in Parlia-
ment Assembled.

THE Corruption of Our Stage, most Noble Senators, is so very Palpable and Notorious, that the Authors themselves who Live by it, and have lately writ in Defence of it, are forc'd to acknowledge it wants a Reformation *.

But when they come to Particulars, every one stands upon his own Defence, and refuses to acknowledge, that the Plays of his Writing contain any thing Culpable or Blame-worthy.

All of them write in Defence of the Stage, and some of them plead, the Usefulness and Absolute Necessity of it, at the Expence of the Honour and Credit of the Nation, whom they Charge as the most Splenetick and Religious People in Europe †; and that they stand in need of the Drama, as a Sovereign Preservative against the Mischievous Effects of that Distemper.

At Your Feet therefore, most Noble Senators, the following Sheets are bumbly laid, as containing, (amongst other things) a Vindication of the Brave and Generous People whom You Represent, from that Foul Slander: and Charging the Guilt upon the True Criminals,

* Pref. to
Beauty in
Distress.
Defense of
Dramatick
Poetry.
Usefulness
of the
Stage, &c.

† Mr. Dennis
in his Use-
fulness of
the Stage.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

who endeavour'd to tear Our Constitution in pieces, by setting Our Kings and Parliaments at Variance, and endeavouring to have Liberty and Property swallowed up by Prerogative, to which wicked Design, the Stage hath not a little Contributed.

The Bleeding Morals of this Gallant Nation, are past the Cure of all Quack-pretenders; It is His Majesty and Your Honours alone, who are capable of applying the Sovereign Remedy, by obliging Magistrates and Ministers to perform their Duty, or enabling them to do it by New Laws, if those we have already be not sufficient. Our Gracious Sovereign hath not only rescued us from Popery and Tyranny, but out of his Fatherly Care, to prevent our future Danger, hath again and again recommended it to His People to take Effectual Methods for the Suppressing of Prophaneness and Immorality, which the Enemies of our Religion and Liberty made use of, as the most successful Engines to Ruine both.

The Author of this Treatise has endeavour'd to prove, That the Corruption of the Stage is in a great measure owing to the Method of Educating our Youth in Schools; from whence the Infection spreads into the Universities and Pulpits: And having been Encouraged by the late Reigns and part of the Clergy, hath at last prov'd so fatal to the Manners of the People, that the Stage is become a general Nusance, and hath been complained of as such, not only by Puritans and those who oppos'd King

Charles

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Charles I. as the Advocates of the Theatre do falsely pretend, - but by Antient and Modern Church of England Divines, and hath been sometimes Restrained, and at other times entirely Banished, by the States of England in Parliament Assembled.

Whether the Merits of the present Stage, be such as may deserve a more favourable Censure at Your Hands, is Submitted (as is fit it should) to Your Great Wisdom.

In the following Treatise, there's the Opinion of the Jewish and Christian Church, of the Greatest of the Heathen Philosophers and Poets, of the Heathen, Greek and Roman State, of the first Christian Emperours, &c. and of Our English State, against the Theatre fairly exhibited : But seeing the Defenders of the Play-house argue the Usefulness of it to the English Nation in general, and to the present Government in particular, it is reasonable the Appeal should be to Our Honourable Representatives, and that the Arguments pro and con should be laid before them, not doubting (if they think fit at all to take it into Consideration) but they will give a True and Righteous Judgment in the Matter.

It is not in England alone, where the Lawfulness or Ulawfulness of the Stage, and the Immorality and Profaneness of it, is the present Subject of Controversie. But in France and Italy, nay at Rome it self, where as well as at Paris, the Stage has of late, as all the Publick Intelligences inform us, receiv'd a Check,
tho'

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tho' the Prefacer to the Play call'd, **Beauty in Distress**, says, the French Stage is so Reform'd as not to fall under the Censure of the Ancient Fathers. The Honour of our Nation and Religion would therefore seem to require, that our Theatres should come under Examination, as well as theirs; but the Time when, and the Method how, must be left to the Wisdom of the King and Parliament to determine.

In the mean time it were to be wished that our English Ladies and Gentlewomen, whose Encouragement and Presence is the most powerful Argument (after all) for the Defence of the Stage (and by whose absenting themselves it must fall in Course without Law or Statute) would be pleased to consider, 'That the wise Roman Senate approv'd the Divorce which Sempronius Sophus gave to his Wife for no other Reason, 'but that she resorted to the Cirques and Play-houses without his Consent; the very sight of 'which might make her an Adulteress, and cause

* Valer. 'her to defile his Bed*. And the Christian Max. I. 6. Emperor Justinian made the following Constitution, That a Man might lawfully put away c. 3. § 12. his Wife, if she resort to Cirques, to Play-houses or Stage-Plays without his Privity and Consent, because her Chastity might thereby be

† Justin. Cod. I. 5. endangered†.

Tit. 17. De Repud. & Novella. 22. If Our Stage then be so much Corrupted as its Advocates themselves are forc'd to confess, its influence upon the Morals of the Audience must needs be dangerous, and therefore its hop'd our English Senators will be as careful of the

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the Chastity of the English Ladies, as the Ancient Roman Senators were of theirs, and that our English Women, whose Beauty is every where admir'd, will readily Consent to any thing that may preserve their Modesty too from being so much as Questioned.

Advertisement to the Reader.

THE Heads treated on in this Book don't follow in the same order as they are set down in the Title Page, because the Author was oblig'd to take them as they occur'd in the Books, that he answers; but all of them may easily be found out by the Running Titles.

The Reader is also desir'd to take Notice, that the Author designed at first, only to have Writ against teaching the Heathen Poets in Schools, without expunging those Passages that have a tendency to promote Uncleanness, and that is the Reason why nothing but the Schools is mentioned in the Introduction.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 3. Line 22. dele the (.) and put , after *Versails*,
p. 35. l. 13, dele the (,) after *Journey*.
p. 40. l. 10. r. *invitus*.
p. 128. l. 25. r. *Epimantus*.
p. 140. l. 5. r. *adjur'd* instead of *abjur'd*.
p. 162. l. 13. *Genselarics*.
p. 172. l. 20. r. *Personæ* instead of *Personal*.
p. 194. l. 34. r. *were* instead of *there*.
p. 198. l. 34. r. *Moses* instead of *Samuel*.

Some may perhaps object against what is said p. 200. that Oliver made Richlieu to tremble, whereas Richlieu died soon after Oliver began to appear, the Author owns that this slipt his Observation till the Sheet was printed off, but the Argument holds good as to the French Nation, and his Successor Mazarin.

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FINIS.

Introduction.

We have had lately a Curious and Learned Survey of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage; but, tho' that Author hath done excellently well, there may still be some Gleanings left for another. Mr. Collier strikes directly at the Miscarriages of the Stage, because they were most obvious and nearest to View; but this ought not supersede the Endeavours of others, nor to put a stop to their Inquiry into the Root of the Mischief.

If the Foundation be sapp'd, the Superstructures must tumble of course; and it signifies little to patch the Roof, or to tell us that it Rains in at the Sky-Lights, when an Inundation comes in at Doors and Windows.

There's none can be fit to write for the Stage, that hath not first been at School; and if we be instructed there in Plays and Romances; its but natural we should think our selves good Proficients, and that we have in a great measure answered the End of our Education, when we can oblige the World with those of our own Composure.

— If the *Amorous Passages* of *Ovid*, *Terence*, *Plautus*, &c. be thought commendable Patterns, fit to be put into the hands of Youth, and by them imbib'd as proper Nourishment, why should not the Harvest answer the Seed-time? or why should the Scholar be blam'd to Vie with his Masters Copy? or when time and opportunity serves, to sett up for a Master himself?

C A P. I.

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IF our Shepherds have no better Morals than to feed their Lambs with the Milk of Goats, why should they not expect that their Flocks in time should come to smell Rank, and where's the Justice to bait and worry them when they do so?

If the Pulpits be so grossly negligent, as not to tell us with *Tertullian* †, that Stage-Plays are the Chief of those Pomps that we abjure at Baptism; or if they will needs Canonize one as a Martyr and Saint, who by Royal Authority introduc'd the Use of Masks and Plays into his Court and Dominions on Sundays, and never testified his Repentance for it to the World; why should not they who write and frequent Plays think they are in the Path Road to Heaven as well as he? and why may not they who distinguish themselves from others by such like performances, hope some time or other to bear him company in the Calendar?

If the Head and Fathers of the Church did prosecute Mr. *Prin* for his *Histrionatrix*, and condemn those for Schismaticks who would not Comply with *Laud's Book of Sports and Pastimes on Sundays*, whereof Masks and Opera's at Court led the Van, why should not the Writing and Haunting of Plays be reckon'd genuine Marks of a true Son of the Church, and the contrary the Badge of one that is no true Church-man? as a certain Clergy-man thought fit to express it in relation to K. *William* because of his not frequenting the Play-house.

Let the Clergy, if they seriously design a Reform-

form in this particular, strike St. Ch—s out of their Calender, or declare their opposition to St. Chrysostom *, Tertullian †, and many others that might be named, who thought the writing and frequenting of Plays to be damnable without Repentance, and much more the commanding and patronizing them.

* Hom. 6. in
Matt.

† Tertul:
de specacu-
lis.

It cannot be denied but Mr. Collier has written ingeniously, and has taken a great deal of pains to hew and lop off the Branches ; and considering how much the Play-house was favoured in the Reign of Charles I. by some of the highest Dignity in the Church, we have more reason to wonder that he hath said so much, than that he hath said any thing too little, because that part of the Sense of Antiquity, which he hath repeated to us in this Matter, does obliquely condemn that Prince whom so many Ecclesiasticks of great Note, have always accounted a Martyr : Besides, his writing against Plays at present, and some of the principal Authors of them, is not like to be accounted an extraordinary piece of Service to the Courts of St. Germain and Versails. If we consider that the Restoring and Encouraging of Play-houses, was one of the chief Expedients of those who were resolved to put Cardinal Mazarins Advice in Execution, which was to debauch the Nation, in order to the better Introducing of Popery and Slavery ; and therefore those who reflect upon Mr. Collier * for his Nonjurancy, for his Book, called, *A Perswasive to Consideration* : and for his Absolving Sir William Perkins and Sir John Friend at Tyburn, ought not to be angry p. 30, 37. with him for writing against the Stage.

* Defence of
Dramatick
Poetry.

If all our Church-men had done their Duty as well as Mr. Collier has done his, in this Matter, Stage-Plays had never been suffered in the Nation,

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nor had there been the least pretence for their Usefulness: But in K. Charles I. Time, they were necessary to Ridicule the Puritans, and run down the Patrons of Liberty and Property. And in K. Char. II. Reign, they were no less wanted to lash the Dissenters and Whiggs that oppos'd Tyranny, and needful to promote the Glorious Design of Debauching the Nation, and to baffle the Evidence of the Popish Plots. And now, by the just Judgment of God, the Clergy, who did but too much Countenance the Proceedings of those Reigns, are lash'd and expos'd in the Play-houses themselves, which Mr. Collier complains of. This it's hop'd will cure their Itch of Adorning or rather disguising the Doctrines of the Gospel, with the Phrase of the Stage, and their fondness of Reading Plays for refining their Stile.

No Clergy-man can propose to himself any justifiable End in Reading Plays, but that which Mr. Collier has excellently perform'd, to wit, the exposing their Immorality and Profaneness, and to discover their Failure in their pretended Designs.

It is altogether unsufferable to hear a sort of young Divines, Regale our Ears from the Pulpit, with the Rhetorick of a Play, while at the same time they Treat the Phrase of the Scripture, and the Language of Antient and Learned Divines as Unintelligible Cant; and yet that this hath been, and is still too common amongst some of our Clergy-men, cannot be denied: So long as those Writings of Parkers and others, which call the *New Birth* a *Fantastical Jargon*, or those Sermons which treat the Doctrine of St. Austin, Calvin and Beza, nay, and of the Articles of the Church of England too, as Stuff and Cant, have an Existence.

Mr. Collier and others may write Volumes against the Stage as long as they please, but they will

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will find it to little purpose, whilst the Plays are so much read and encourag'd by the Clergy, and by 'em retail'd again to the People. If the Language of the Play-house be thought fit to be made use of, as an Ornament to a Sermon, the Hearers will be apt to conclude that the Stage is not so Criminal a Thing as some Men would have it accounted. And seeing Mr. Collier has been so much approv'd for lashing the Poets and the Stage, there's no reason to think that it should be taken amiss in another, to censure the vanity of such of the Clergy as write Plays or Preach in that Dialect, and have neglected to inform their People of the Danger of the Play-house.

Had they taken due care to instruct their Auditors in this Matter at Church, the Audiences would never have been so numerous at the Stage: For why should I think there's any hurt in the Theatre, when I see that its ordinary for our Gallants on a Saturday to prepare themselves by a Play for Hearing a Sermon on Sunday: Nay, sometimes it may be for the Sacrament. And yet the Parson hath not the Courage or Honesty to reprove it; but perhaps chuses it as the most proper way to recommend himself to the Applause of his Hearers, to deliver his Preachment in the stile of a Comedy.

Our Wits indeed, when passing their Judgment on a Sermon, think they give the Preacher a large Encomium, when they say he has read abundance of Play-Books. Which let our Youngsters in Divinity value as they please, I should think it the most picquant Satyr that could be put upon me, were I worthy of bearing the Indelible Character.

But that those flanting Preachers may have no occasion to say that I am alone in this Matter, I shall pray them to consider the following Au-

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^{† De Vita Contemp. lib. 3. cap. 6. fol. 105.} *Proper* says to such †, Whilst they would seem Nice and Elegant, they grow perfectly Mad with fulsom Expressions. St. *Jerom* writing to *Nepotianus*, Advises him when he is Preaching in the Church, To labour for the Groans and not for the Applause of his Hearers. — Not to behave himself like a Declaimer of feigned Orations, or a pretended Advocate, and to talk without Measure. The Sermon of a Minister ought to be

^{* Epist. 22. f. 15.} seasoned with Quotations from Scripture *. *Proper Aquitanicus* says, That a Preacher ought not to value himself upon the Accuracy of his Stile, except he have more mind to shew his own Learning, than to edifie the Church of God. That his Sermon ought to be so plain, that the most ignorant Persons may understand it ; the business of Declaimers or Makers of Orations being one thing, and that of Preachers another : The former endeavour to set off the Pomp of an Elaborate Speech, with the utmost strength of their Eloquence : The latter seek after the Glory of

^{+ De Vita Contemp. lib. 1. c. 23. 24, 25.} God, in a sober and plain Discourse †. Of the same Opinion are St. *Jerom*, *Ambrose*, *Theodore*, *Theophylact*, and others ; as appears by their Commentaries on 1 Cor. 2. 1, &c.

Isidorus Pelusiota taxes some Monks of his time for their affected Stile in Preaching. Who can abstain from Satyrs against you (says he) when they bear your Sermons cram'd with Heathen Historians and Poets ? Pray what is there in them preferable to our Religion ? — Therefore either let your Sermons be Grave, and prefer a Modest Stile to big swelling Words and pompous Rhetorick, or give me leave to say, That you are fitter for the

^{† Epist. 1. 1.} Stage than the Pulpit †.

^{Epist. 62, 63} The Bishop of Chemnis in his *Onus Ecclesie* *, Cap. 16. has very remarkable Sayings to this purpose ; and amongst others those that follow. In these last days — the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is utterly

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utterly lost ; the Preachers being puffed up with Knowledge, teach their own Notions. They extol the Learning of the Heathen Philosophers, and thereby darken the Sun-shine of Christian Wisdom : And now most of the Schools, where Divinity was formerly taught, are filled with Poetical Fictions, Empty Trifles and Monstrous Fables. The Preachers hunt after their own Applause, and study to gratifie the Ears of their Auditors with Ornate and Polite Discourses ; But true Sermons are better than those that are Elegant. And let those Eloquent Doctors know, that our Saviour says of them, In vain do ye Worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

To conclude this Point with the Authority of the Apostle St. Paul † ; he commends his own Sermons because his Speech and his Preaching was not with enticing Words of Mans Wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power ; yet this great Apostle of the Gentiles was brought up at the Feet of Gamaliel, and had more humane Learning than 20 of our fluttering Doctors.

It is not my design to cry down Eloquence in a Preacher, nor to commend a rough way of Expression from the Pulpit. Eloquence is the Gift of God, and commended in the Preacher Apollos ; but at the same time we are told, That he was mighty in the Scriptures and taught diligently the things of the Lord †.

It's reckoned highly prophane (and Mr. Collier has smartly reproved it) for Poets to apply the Phrase of the Scripture to the use of the Stage ; and I see no reason why Vice Versa, it should not be liable to that same Censure, to adopt the Phrase of the Stage, for the Language of the Pulpit, nor that it's absolutely Unlawful for a Preacher to quote an apposite Sentence or Verse, either from Greek, Latine or other Poets. The Apostle

† Acts 18.

24, 25.

himself hath taught us the contrary by his own Example, when he tells the Cretians that one of their own Poets says,

* Tit. 1.12. *Kę̄ntes dei Ps̄sal, rana dñeia, yas̄ges ap̄yal*.*

But it is an intolerable Affectation of Novelty, when a New Word or a Quaint Phrase is no sooner published in a Play or Gazzette, but we shall the next *Sunday* after hear it out of the Pulpit. This is so far from holding fast *the Form of*

* 2 Tim. 1. *sound Words*, as St. Paul enjoyned *Timothy* *, that it

13. is rather *the profane and vain Babbling*, he
† 1 Tim. 6. *commanded him to avoid*; and which † *Calvin*
20. upon the place, says is, *Inanis tinnitus. & pro-*

fanus — Similatq; Doctores ita inflant suas ti-
bias ad suam Eloquentiam Venditandam; A profane and empty Jingle which the Doctors make use of to set off their Eloquence.

It were an easie matter to quote as many Sermons, guilty of these Vanities, as Mr. Collier has quoted Plays guilty of abusing Scripture; but for obvious Reasons I forbear it. The only cause why I mention it, is to shew that it is not the Poets alone, that support the Credit of the Stage, and that what is Criminal in a Poet, is ten times worse in a Priest; and therefore they ought not to pass without a Reproof.

It's known, there are many godly Persons amongst our Clergy, who bewail those things, and oppose them as much as they can; but there is a mighty Neglect somewhere, and the World will hardly be perswaded that our Church of England is unanimous in this Matter, *else it were easie for them, who shook King James out of his Throne, to overturn the Stage.*

It is not to be supposed that the King and Parliament would deny the Clergy such a Request, if it were duly presented; and considering how much the Nation hath suffered in its Morals and Religion,

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gion, by the Licentiousness of the Stage, it's high time that some effectual Course should be taken to suppress it.

But there's reason to fear that the Faction begun by Arch-bishop *Laud*, has still too great an interest amongst our Clergy; for scarcely can any other reason be imagined, why, after so many Years Experience of the Mischief of the Stage, the Church should be so silent in this Matter. That there is something in this, I am very apt to think, because of the Deference many of the Clergy-men pay to the Memory of that Prelate, and of his Master King *Charles I.* whom he help'd to mislead. In those Times, as Mr. *Prin* acquaints us in his *Histriomastix*, none were accounted Enemies to the Play-house but Puritans and Precians, and in opposition to them it probably was that *Laud* and his Clergy became its Patrons; and it is not unlike that many of the Less-thinking Church-men continue still to favour it on that Account, as being unwilling to condemn that, for which King *Charles I.* and Arch-bishop *Laud* testified so much Passion; but these Gentlemen would do well to remember, *That the Defence of the Stage was never so much the Characteristick of their Church, as was the Doctrine of Passive Obedience;* and seeing the Majority of them have relinquished that, they are infinitely the more to blame for still adhering to this.

If a Petition of the Londoners had so much Influence on Queen *Elizabeth*, as to get the Play-houses suppress'd, and if the Stage was expressly condemned by a Statute of King *James I.* we have no reason to despair of obtaining the same now upon the like Application. And methinks the Clergy are more concerned to stir in it than ever, seeing it would appear by Mr. Collier's third Chapter, Of the Clergy abused by the Stage, that

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the Theatre is now become a Nusance to themselves.

It is apparent enough from what has been said already, that the Clergy are chargeable with the Mischief of the Stage, by the omitting of what their Character obliges them to do against it, and that many of them are also Culpable by seeming to hallow its Phrase in the Pulpit; but this is not all, as will appear by what follows.

We have heard that the Stage was condemned by A&t of Parliament in King *James I.* Time, but reviv'd again in the Reign of K. *Charles*, contrary to Law; and that Operas were practised in his own Court, by his Royal Authority on *Sundays*. Now confidering how much that Prince was devoted to the Interest of the Clergy, it's highly improbable that he would have attempted any such thing, had the then Governing part of the Church given him faithful warning against it, but *Laud* and the other topping Church-men of that time, were fo far from oppofing it, that they concur'd with him, & impos'd a Book of Sports and Pastimes, upon all their Clergy, to be read to the People on *Sundays*, which was a fair step towards converting all the Churches of the Nation into Play-houſes.

This great Example did so much incourage the Stage, that Mr. *Prim* tells us in his Book before-mentioned, in two Years time there were above 40000 Play-Books printed: They became more vendible than the choicest Sermons: Grew up from Quarto's to Folio's; were printed on far better Paper than most of the Octavo or Quarto Bibles, and were more saleable than they. And *Shakspears* Plays in particular were printed in the best Paper. — The two old Play-houſes were rebuilt and enlarged, and a new Theatre erected; fo that there were then fix Play-houſes in *London*, twice the number of those in *Rome*

Rome in Nero's Time, which though a much more spacious City, *Seneca* complains of as being too many. That Faction of the Clergy became at last so enamour'd of the Stage, that the same Author informs us *, He had heard some Preachers call their Text a Land-skip or Picture, and others a Play or Spectacle, dividing their Texts into Actors, Spectators, Scenes, &c. as if they had been Acting a Play. Upon which he complains of their using Play-house Phrases, Clinches and strong Lines, as they called them ; and that it was too frequent to have Sermons in respect of their Divisions, Language, Action, Stile and Subject Matter, fitter for the Stage from whence they were borrowed, than for the Pulpit. He + pag. 929. tells us + further, That one *Atkinson* a Minister in *Bedford*, did the Christtide before, Act a private Interlude in the Commissaries House there, where he made a Prayer on the Stage ; chose the Words, *Acts 10. 14. I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean*, for his Text ; preached prophaneley upon it, and jested to the shame and grief of most that heard him. In that same place he complains that in private as well as in popular Stage-plays, they represented Ministers Preaching and Praying, and brought the Sacred Bible and the Stories of it on the Stage, contrary to the Statute of 3. *Jac. Cap. 21.*

The same Author tells us likewise *, That one *Giles Widdowes* in a Sermon at *Carfolkes* in *Oxford*, on *Psalm 68. verse 25.* did avowedly justifie the Lawfulness of mix'd Dancing at Church-ales and Maypoles upon the Lords Day, and confirm'd his Doctrine by his own Practise. And page 700. he informs us of three Doctors of Divinity, viz. *Dr. Gager*, *Dr. Gentiles* and *Dr. Case*, who writ in Defence of Stage plays. And page 979. he insinuates, that diverse of the Clergy had

had acted and danced on publick and private Stages.

The Theatre having thus made so large a Conquest, as to get the Court and the Governing part of the Church on its side, grew Rampant, and as if it disdained to have any less Adversary than God himself, did boldly usurp on the Sabbath Afternoons. And thus in the Year 1637. Masks were set up at Court on *Sundays*, by His Majesties Authority, while at the same time *Laud* and his Faction forbade Preaching any oftner than once a day, and that the common People who could not bear the Expence, nor have the Opportunities of Stage-plays, might not want one however to profane the Sabbath, the Book of Sports and Pastimes was enjoyned by the Bishops to be read in the Churches by their Inferior Clergy on pain of Deprivation.

C A P. II.

The Stage Encouraged by King Charles I.

Sundays MASKS.

THAT the World may see what a Noble Exchange we had for our Afternoon Sermons and Evening Lectures, I shall here give an Account of the Mask that was presented by the Kings Majesty at *Whitehall*, in 1637. on the *Sunday* after *Twelfth-night*, Entituled, *BRITANNIA TRIUMPHANS*, by *Inigo Jones Surveyer of His Majesties Works*, and *William Davenant Her Majesties Servant*.

We

We are told in the Introduction, ‘ That for these three Years their Majesties had intermitted those Masques and Shews, because the Room where they were formerly presented, having the Seeing richly adorn’d since, with Painting of great Value, Figuring the Acts of K. James of blessed Memory, they were afraid it might suffer by the Smoke of the Lights, but His Majesty having now ordered a New Room to be made on purpose, which was performed in two Months, the Scenes for this Mask were prepared. Now who can say but these were Reasons becoming a Martyr? and that this was a frugal way of spending his Treasure, when at the same time he extorted Money from his Subjects in a Tyrannical manner by Ship-money, Loans, &c.

We come now to the Subject of the Mask.

‘ *Britanocles*, the Glory of the Western World, hath by his Wisdom, Valour and Piety, not only vindicated his own, but far distant Seas infested with Pyrates, and reduc’d the Land by his Example to a real knowledge of all good Arts and Sciences. These Eminent Acts *Bellerophon* in a wise Pity, willingly would preserve from devouring time, and therefore to make them last to our Posterity, gives a command to Fame, who hath already spread them abroad) that she should now at home (if there can be any maliciously insensible) awake them from their pretended Sleep, that even they, with the large, yet still increasing Number of the Good and Loyal, may mutually admire and rejoice in our happiness.

This makes it evident enough, that the subject was K. Charles himself, who had gained some advantage

King Charles I. Sundays Mask.

vantage against the Pirates of *Barbary*, the praise of which there was none would have envied him; but this was a new way of singing *Te Deum*; no great Argument of Religion, and far less any Presage that he should become a Martyr for it, to order a Masque for his own praise, upon that day, which by Divine Institution was set apart for the praise of our Redeemer.

The next thing we have an Account of is,
 That the Queen being sat under the State, and
 the Room fill'd with Spectators of Quality, a
 Stage was raised at the lower end with an Oval
 Stair down into the Room. The first thing
 which presented it self to the Eye, was the
 Ornament that inclosed the Scene. In the under
 part of which were two Pedestals of a solid
 Order, whereon the Captives lay bound; above
 sat two Figures in Neeches; on the right hand
 a Woman in a Watchet Drapery, heightened
 with Silver; on her Head a *Corona Rostrata*,
 with one Hand holding the Rudder of a Ship,
 and in the other a little winged Figure, with a
 branch of Palm and a Garland. This Woman
 was to represent Naval Victory. In the other
 Neech on the left, sat the Figure of a Man,
 bearing a Scepter, with a Hand and an Eye in
 the Palm, and in the other hand a Book; on
 his Head a Garland of *Amaranthus*; his Curace
 was of Gold with a *Palludamentum* of Blue,
 and Antick Bases of Crimson; his Foot tread-
 ing on the Head of a Serpent. This Figure was
 to represent Right Government: Above these
 were Ornaments cut out like Cloath of Silver,
 tied up in Knots, with Scarfings all touch'd with
 Gold.

These Pillasters bore up a large Freeze, with
 a Sea-Triumph of naked Children riding on
 Sea-

‘ Sea-Horses, and Fishes, and young Tritons with
‘ writhen Trumpets, and other Maritime Fancies.
‘ In the midst was placed a great Compartment
‘ of Gold, with branches of Palm coming out
‘ of the Scrols ; and within that a lesser of Sil-
‘ ver, with this Inscription, *Virtutis Opus*, pro-
‘ per to the Subject of this Mask, and alluding to
‘ that of *Virgil*, *Sed famam Extendere fatus* ; from
‘ this came a Drapery of Crimson, which being
‘ tied up with great Knots in the Corners, hung
‘ down in Foulds on the sides of the Pillasters.

‘ A Curtain flying up discovered the first Scene,
‘ wherein were English Houses of the old and
‘ newer Forms, intermixt with Trees, and a far
‘ off, a prospect of *London* and the River of
‘ *Thames*.

So much for the Pomp of this *Sunday's Theatre*. And let any Man who has the least sense of Religion judge, whether it does not smell strong of that Pomp and Vanity of the World, which Christians abjure at Baptism, and was by consequence the most unbecoming Exercise for a Sabbath that could be invented, as having an unavoidable Tendency to take up the Thoughts of the Actors and Spectators throughout the whole day, and to wear off the Impressions of any Sermons, they might have heard in the former part of it.

But we come now to the Opera it self.

‘ From different parts of the Scene came *Action*
‘ and *Imposture*. *Action* a Young Man in a rich
‘ Habit down to his Knees, with a large Guard
‘ of Purple about the Skirt, wherein was written
‘ with Silver Letters *Medio tutissima* ; on his
‘ Head a Garland of Lawrel, and in one Hand a
‘ branch of Willow. *Imposture* came in a Coat
‘ of

of Hanging-Sleeves and great Skirts, little Breeches, an high crown'd Hat one side pin'd up, a little Ruff, and a formal Beard ; an Angling-rod in his Hand, with a Fish at the Hook, and a Bag and Horn at his Girdle.

It is easie to discern, that the design of this was to represent the graver sort of People in those times, as Impostors and Cheats, and that they only pretended to Gravity and Religion the better to hide their Covetousness and other Lusts ; but methinks the High-crown'd Hat turn'd up on one side, the little Ruff and the formal Beard, might have been forborn out of respect to the King and his Father ; the latter in most of his Pictures is represented to us in such a Hat and Ruff, and a Beard formal to the utmost ; and the Son is always drawn with his Collar-Band, and a Beard so formal, that were it not for his Armour and Battoon of Command, we should take him sooner for a Bishop than a King. But we must remember it was a Mask ! The Court made haste enough to pull off the Vizard afterwards.

Action enters first, and I suppose this Name was given him, because he must be thought to practise what the other only pretended to. He rants at *Imposture*, not with an Oath ! that was not King *Charles's* Crime ; for to give him his due, they say he abhor'd Swearing ; and therefore *Action*, like one that would keep the middle, betwixt the Dammee Ruffian, and the Precise Puritan, falls upon *Imposture*, with an Adjuration ; as follows,

* My

' My variable Sir ; ith' Name of Heav'n
 ' What makes your falsehood here where fame
 (intends
 ' Her Triumphs all of Truth ? —————
 Thou art so useless to the World
 ' That thou art impudent when thou dost share
 ' What is most cheap, and common unto all
 ' The Air, and Light ; I do beseech thee my
 ' Fine, false Artificer, hide both thy Faces
 ' (For thou art double every where) steal hence
 ' And I'll take care, thou shalt no more be miss'd
 ' Than Shadows are at Night.

Considering how our Poets dress'd *Imposture*, as before observ'd, the Scope of this is plain enough, to perswade the Spectators of Quality, that such Persons as blamed and opposed those *Sunday-Revels* (and that was the best of the Bishops, Benefic'd Clergy, and People, as well as the professed Dissenters, who were then but few) did not deserve to live in the Nation ; and that those who would not comply with the Book of Sports, and other Innovations then on foot, were justly prosecuted as Hypocrites and Impostors.

Imposture Answers at first, with disdain and contempt of this Rant ; ————— and then says,

' ————— I hide my self ?
 ' The Reason shall be strong that must perswade
 ' Me under Ground : The Badger loves his Hole,
 ' Yet is not so bashful, but dares look out
 ' And shew himself, when there is prey abroad.
 ' I smile at thee (the graver way of scorn)
 ' For should I laugh, I fear 'twold make thee think
 ' Thy Impudence had somewhat in't of wit.

Then a little lower,

- ‘ Wisely the jealous Scepticks did suspect
- ‘ Reality in every thing, for every thing but seems
- ‘ And borrows the Existence it appears
- ‘ To have : *Imposture* governs all, even from
- ‘ The guilded Ethnick Mitre, to the painted Staff :
- ‘ O th’ Christian Constable, all but pretend
- ‘ Th’ resemblance of that power, which inwardly
- ‘ They but deride, and whisper merry Questions
(to themselves)
- ‘ Which way it comes.

Bairn and Story And after.

- ‘ That universally shall take which most
- ‘ doth please _____.

_____ Is it not fit

- ‘ And almost safest to cousen all, when all
- ‘ Delight still to be cousen’d.

Here the Poet explains whom he meant by *Imposture*, when he brings him in attacking the Episcopal Dignity, and would persuade the Audience, that he was for Anarchy too ; so that the Constable shall not escape his lash, though he moves in the very lowest Orb of Civil Authority. This was calculated for the then Metidian of Lambeth, to represent those that were against Arch-bishop Laud’s Pride and Innovations in the Church, as Enemies likewise to the State.

But, by the Poets leave, he makes his *Imposture* speak quite out of Character, when he brings him to an open Profession of his design to cheat Mankind. Impostors are more cunning than to do so ; they put on Sheeps Cloathing, though they be inwardly Ravening Wolves : So that he should rather have called him a *professed Atheist*, than an *Impostor*, when he appears thus in his proper Colours, and that to his professed Enemy too.

Action Reply,

- ‘ These Lectures would
- ‘ Subdue a numerous Sect, wert thou to preach
- ‘ To young soft Courtisans, unpractis’d Heirs
- ‘ Of over-practis’d Usurers——
- ‘ But Fate takes not so little care of those
- ‘ For whom it doth preserve the Elements :
- ‘ That what is chief within us should be quite
- ‘ Deprav’d, as if we were only born to aim
- ‘ At Trifles here, like Children in their first
- ‘ Estate of using Legs, to run at fight
- ‘ Of Bubbles, and to leap at noise of Bells.

Here’s a jerk at the Citizens whom the Court Characterized thus in those Times, and a flout at Original Sin, denying our Depravation by Nature ; a practise very becoming the Head of the Church, to run down her Doctrine : But more of this Anon.

Imposture Answers,

- ‘ Even to believ’t, and in their chieffest growth
- ‘ They follow but my Grandfire Mahomets
- ‘ Divinity, who doth allow the good a handsom (Girl)
- ‘ On Earth, the Valiant two in paradise.

Here again *Imposture* talks out of Character, when he owns his lascivious Principles, but a little Amour must be pull’d in by Head and Shoulders, the better to edifie the young Gallants after Sermon.

Action upbraids *Imposture* in his Reply, thus,

- ‘ Thou art so read in humane Appetites,
- ‘ That were the Devil licenc’d to assume

King Charles I. Sundays Mask.

- ‘ A Body, thou might’st be his Cook, yet know
- ‘ _____ There are some few amongst Men
- ‘ That as our making is erect, look up
- ‘ To face the Stars, and fancy nobler hopes
- ‘ Than you allow, not down-ward hang their (Heads)
- ‘ Like Beasts to meditate on Earth, on abject (Things)
- ‘ Beneath their Feet.

Here *Action* becomes a stout Champion for Vertue to insinuate to the Spectators, that it was lodg’d at Court, and not amongst its Opposers.

Imposture Answers, with a severe scoff upon the Clergy.

- ‘ ’Tis a thin number sure
- ‘ And much dispers’d, for they will hardly meet
- ‘ In Councils and in Synods to enact
- ‘ Their Doctrine by Consent ; That the next Age
- ‘ May say they parted Friends.

To which *Action* Answers.

- ‘ ’Tis possible
- ‘ Lefs you steal in amongst them to disturb
- ‘ Their Peace, disguis’d in a Canonick Weed,
- ‘ Nor are these such, that by their Reasons strict
- ‘ And rigid Discipline, must fright nice Court
- ‘ Philosophers from their belief, such as impute
- ‘ A Tyrannous intent to Heav’nilly Powers
- ‘ And that their Tyranny alone did Point
- ‘ At Men, as if the Faun and Kid were made
- ‘ To frisk and caper out their time, and it
- ‘ Were sin in us to dance, the Nightingale
- ‘ To sing her Tragick Tales of Love, and we
- ‘ To recreate our selves with groans, as if
- ‘ All Perfumes for the Tyger were ordain’d

‘ Cause

- ‘ Cause he excels in Scent : Colours and gawdy
(Tinctures for
- ‘ The Eastern Birds, whilst all our Ornament
- ‘ Are Russet Robes, like melancholy Monks.

Now *Action* has got his Rant out ; here's whole Peals of Ordnance and Chain-shot, against those that adher'd to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, against *Laud*'s Arminianism : The charge is no less, than that they are Enemies to the Church, and accuse God of Tyranny towards Men. Whilst Birds and Beasts frisk and flutter about in their gawdy Furs and Feathers, we poor Mortals are called to Mourning, Repentance and Humiliation ; a sort of Doctrine the Stage will have nothing to do with, except it be to ridicule it. But here's not one word all this while, that Man hath finn'd, and therefore must sorrow before he can lay any solid Claim to be a sharer in Joy. That was none of the Poets business ; he was to preach up Mirth and Jollity, and to perswade to it by an unanswerable Argument. The Beasts and Birds are so, and therefore we should be so too. Then at the Conclusion, comes the old false Charge against Seriousnes in Religion. It deprives us of all the Comforts of Life ; and condemns us to Rags and Melancholy ; enough to make the Gallants of the Audience out of Love with it for all their Days, and to ridicule Clergy-men of all sorts ; a proper Work for the Evening of the Sabbath.

The next Entertainment is *Merlin* the Prophe-tick Magician, brought upon the Stage by *Impostures* means, to conjure up from Hell the great *Seducers* of the Nation, and upon *Merlins* striking the Air with his Rod. ‘ The whole Scene, says our Poet, was transformed into an horrid Hell, from the Suburbs of which, enter the several Antimasks.

I. Entry.

Of Mock-Musick of 5 Persons.

- ‘ One with a Viol, the rest with
- ‘ Taber and Pipe,
- ‘ Knackers and Bells,
- ‘ Tongs and Key,
- ‘ Gridiron and Shooing-Horn.

II. Entry.

- A Ballad-singer } with their Auditory.
- His Companion }
- A Porter laden
- A Vintner's Boy
- A Kitchin-Maid with a Hand-basket
- A Saylor.

III. Entry.

- ‘A Crier of Mouse-traps, bearing the Engines be-
- ‘A Seller of Tinder-Boxes, longing to their Trades.
- ‘A Master of
- ‘Two Baboons and
- ‘An Ape.

IV. Entry.

- ‘ A Mountebank in the Habit of a Grave Doctor
- ‘ A Zany } their Men
- ‘ A Harlequin }
- ‘ An old lame Chair-woman
- ‘ Two pale Wenches presenting their Urinals,
 (and he distributing his
- ‘ Printed Receipts out of a Budget.

V. Entry.

V. Entry.

' Four old fashion'd Parasitical Courtiers.

VI. Entry.

' Of Rebellious Leaders in War

' Cade

' Kett

' Jack Straw and

' Their Soldiers.

One can hardly imagine what was the design of this piece of Foolery, except it were to turn Hell into Ridicule, by such a Representation of its Inhabitants, or to be a pattern for the Sports and Pastimes that were enjoyn'd upon the Country for *Sundays*, by His *Majesties* Declaration: But let any Man judge, whether such a Paltry Opera as this, was becoming the Majesty of a Court on any day, or let King *Charles I.* his Admirers, give us an instance if they can, that ever any Martyr employed themselves thus before on a *Sunday*.

' After this, Hell (says our Poet) suddenly vanishes, and there appears a vast Forrest, in which stood part of an old Castle, kept by a Giant: Who by his Character, one of those in *Guild-hall*, was not big enough to be his Page. He is described thus,

' Thisday. (a day as fair as heart could wish)
' This Giant stood on shore of Sea to Fish;
' For Angling-Rod he took a sturdy Oak,
' For Line a Cable that in storm ne're broke.

King Charles I. Sundays Mask.

' His Hook was such as heads the end of Pole
 ' To pluck down House ere Fire consumes it
 (whole
 ' His Hook was baited with a Dragons Tail,
 ' And then on Rock he stood to bob for Whale :
 ' Which straight he caught and nimblly home
 (did pack
 ' With ten Cart-load of Dinner on his back.

Had I been worthy to have advised the Poet, he should have sav'd himself the labour of this witty Composure. The Story of *Gara Gantua* or *Don Quixot*, would have been as diverting sure as this, and equally fit for a Digestion after Sermon on *Sunday*.

The rest I'll venture briefly to tell in Prose, for the Verse is not (in my Opinion) very charming. — *The Giant in his way home spied a Knight and a Lady under a Hedge, within his Purlieus, and laying down his Whale goes toward them in great fury spurning up Trees by the Roots as he went ; asks the Knight how he and his Damsel durst come thither? demands the Lady to be his Cook to dress his Whale, and threatens to beat out the Knights Brains with an Oaken Tree, if he refused her. The Lady made an Apology, That they came thither only to gather Sloes and Bullies —. The Knight takes him up sharply for offering such a Disgrace to his Lady ; and at last by Merlin's Art, the Scuffle was turned into Fantastick Musick, and a Dance.*

I pass over the rest of this impertinent Stuff, and leave *Merlin* to retire to his Stygian Shade a while ; tho' I think he could scarcely be entertained there with greater Works of Darkness, than those that were then acted at *Whitehall*.

[*Merlin* and *Imposture* being gone of]

' In the further part of the Scene, the Earth
' open'd, and there rose up a richly adorned Pal-
' lace ; seeming all of Goldsmiths-work, with
' Porticos Vaulted, on Pillasters of Rustick Work;
' their Bases and Capitels of Gold, in the midst
' was the principal Entrance, and a Gate ; The
' Doors Leaves with Figures of *Basse Releeve*,
' with Jambs and Frontispiece all of Gold ; Above
' these ran an Architrave Freeze, and *Coronis* of
' the same ; the Freeze enrich'd with Jewels :
' This bore up a *Ballestrata*, in the midst of which,
' upon an high Tower with many Windows, stood
' F A M E , in a Carnation-Garment trim'd
' with Gold, with white Wings and flaxen Hair ;
' in one Hand a Golden Trumpet, and in the
' other an Olive Garland.

' In the lower part, leaning on the Rail of the
' Ballasters were two Persons ; that on the right
' Hand personating Arms with a Curace and
' plum'd Helm, and a broken Lance in his Hand.

' On the left Hand a Woman in a Watchet
' Robe trim'd with Silver, on her Head a Bend,
' with little Wings like those of *Mercury*, and a
' Scroul of Parchment in her Hand, representing
' Science.

' When this Pallace was arriv'd to the hight,
' the whole Scene was chang'd into a *Peristilium*
' of two Orders, *Dorick* and *Fonick*, with their
' several Ornaments seeming of white Marble,
' the Bases and Capitels of Gold. This joining
' with the former, having so many Returns, Open-
' ings and Windows, might well be known for
' the Glorious Pallace of *Fame*.

A Very odd Medley to assign one part of the Lord's Day to his own Worship, and another for the Representation of an Heathen Goddess ! This was not the practise of the Primitive Martyrs.

But

But now we come to the chief Design of this Mask ; which was to celebrate the Praises of K. Charles I. *Britanocles*, as *Bellerophon* expresses it :
 ‘ This happy Hour is call’d to Celebrate
 ‘ *Britanocles*, and those that in this Isle
 ‘ The old with Modern Vertues Reconcile.

*The Chorus of POETS, entred in Rich Habits
 of several Colours, with Lawrels on their
 Heads gilt.*

F A M E Sings.

I.

‘ **B**reak forth thou Treasure of our sight,
 ‘ That art the hopeful Morn of every day ;
 ‘ Whose fair Example makes the Light,
 ‘ By which Heroick Vertue finds her way.

II.

‘ O thou our cheerful Morning rise,
 ‘ And strait those misty Clouds of Error clear,
 ‘ Which long have overcast our Eyes ;
 ‘ And else will darken all this Hemisphere.

III.

‘ What to thy power is hard or strange,
 ‘ Since not alone confin’d unto the Land,
 ‘ Thy Scepter to a Trident Change ;
 ‘ And strait unruly Seas thou canst Command !

IV.

‘ How hath thy Wisdom rais’d this Isle,
 ‘ Or thee by what new Title shall we call
 ‘ Since it were lessning of thy Stile ;
 ‘ If we should Name thee *Nature’s Admiral*.

‘ Thou

V.

' Thou Universal Wonder, know
' We all in Darkness mourn till thou appear,
' And by thy absence dull'd may grow ;
' To make a doubt if day were ever here.

Was not this Religiously done to convert any part of the Sabbath, wherein we ought to Celebrate the Praises of our Great Redeemer, to be mispent in such Fulsom Praises of any Mortal Man? and was it not just from God (whatever may be said as to the Instruments) that he whose Power they so blasphemously extol over Sea and Land, should afterwards find himself too Weak for a Party of his own Subjects, that he should receive his first Discomfiture from them on the Sabbath, which he had so horribly profan'd, and be brought to his fatal Exit, in that very Pallace where he suffered God to be so much dishonoured.

' Fame having ended her Song : The Masquers
' came forth of the *Peristilium*, and stood on each
' side, and at that instant the Gate of the Pallace
' opened, and *Britanocles* appeared.

' The Habit of the Masquers was close Bodies
' of Carnation, embroidered with Silver, their
' Arming Sleeves of the same, about their Waste
' two rows of several fashioned Leaves, and under
' this their Bases of white reaching to the middle
' of their Thigh ; on this was an under Basis,
' with Labels of Carnation Embroidered with
' Silver, and betwixt every pain were Puffs of
' Silver fastned in Knots to the Labels : The
' trimming of the Shoulders was as that of the
' Basis; their long Stockings set up were Carnation,
' with white Shoes, and Roses ; their Bands and
' Cuffs

' Cuffs made of Purles of Cut-work, upon their
 ' Heads little Carnation Caps embroidered as the
 ' rest, with a slit turn'd up before, out of the
 ' midst came several falls of white Feathers dimi-
 ' nishing upwards in a Pyramidal Form. This
 ' Habit they chose as beautiful, rich, and light for
 ' dancing, and proper for the subject of this Mask.

' The Pallace being sunk, *Fame* remained ho-
 ' vering in the Air, rose on her Wings singing and
 ' was hidden in the Clouds ; then the Chorus
 ' sung another Song in Praise of *Britanocles*.—
 ' After which the Masquers descended into the
 ' Room and Danced ; which being ended a New
 ' Chorus of Modern Poets raised by *Merlin* in
 ' rich Habits make their Address to the Queen :
 ' thus,

I.

' Our Eyes (long since dissolv'd to Air,)
 ' To thee for day must now repair ;
 ' Though rais'd to Life by *Merlin's* might
 ' Thy Stock of Beauty will supply
 ' Enough of Sun from either Eye,
 ' To fill the Organs of our sight.

II.

' Yet first thy pitty should have drawn,
 ' A Cloud of Cipress or of Laune ;
 ' To come between thy Radiant Beams,
 ' Our Eyes (long darkned in a shade)
 ' When first they so much Light invade ;
 ' Must ake and sicken with Extreams.

III.

' Yet wiser Reason hath prevail'd,
 ' To wish thy Beauties still unvail'd ;
 ' 'Tis better that it blind should make us,
 ' Than we should want such Heavenly Fire
 ' That is so useful to inspire,
 ' Those Raptures which would else forsake us.

If Modesty would not blush at such Entertainment on any day, yet certainly Religion would have abhor'd it on a *Sunday*; and though the Church of *Rome* would admit of it, it ill became the Head of the Church of *England* to approve it.

' After this the Scene was changed, and in the
 ' farthest part the Sea was seen terminating the
 ' sight with the Horizon; on the one side was a
 ' Haven with a Cittadel, and on the other broken
 ' Ground and Rocks, from whence the Sea Nymph
 ' *Galatea* came waving forth, riding on the back of
 ' a Dolphin, in a loose Snow-white Garment; above
 ' her Neck Chains of Pearl, and her Arms adorn'd
 ' with Bracelets of the same; her fair Hair dishe-
 ' veled and mix'd with Silver, and in some part
 ' covered with a Veil, which she with one hand
 ' graciously held up, being arriv'd to the midst of
 ' the Sea, the Dolphin staid, and she sung with a
 ' Chorus of Musick.

Galatea's SONG.

I.

' So well *Britanocles* o're Seas doth Reign,
 ' Reducing what was wild before,
 ' That fairest Sea Nymphs leave the troubled Main;
 ' And haste to visit him on shore.

II.

' What are they less than Nymphs, since each
 (make shew
 ' Of wondrous Immortality,
 ' And each those sparkling Treasures wears that
 (Grew
 ' Where breathleſs Divers cannot pry, &c.

The

The Valediction or Farewell was as follows.

I.

'Wife Nature that the dew of sleep prepares,
'To intermit our Joys and ease our Cares,
'Invites you from these Triumphs to your rest,
'May every Whisper that is made be chaste,
'Each Lady slowly yield, yet yield at last,
'Her Heart a Prisoner to her Lovers Breast!

II.

'To wish unto our Royal Lover more,
'Of youthful blessings than he had before,
'Were but to tempt old Nature 'bove her
'Since all the Odor, Musick beauteous Fire
'We in the Spring, the Spheres, the Stars admire,
'Is his renew'd, and better'd every Night!

III.

'To Bed to Bed may every Lady dream,
'From that chief Beauty she hath stoln a Beam,
'Which will amaze her Lovers Eyes!
'Each lawful Lover to advance his Youth,
'Dream he hath stoln, his Vigor Love, and Truth
'Then all will haste to Bed, but none to rise!

Thus I have brought this Mask to a Conclusion. If the Reader think I have inserted too much of it, he may be pleased to consider that it is very rare and scarcely to be had, and being extraordinary, because of its having been Acted on a Sabbath day, I thought it the more necessary to give a large Account of it, that he might see what sort of Religion or Evening Sermons, it was that the Court and Laud's Faction of the Church then aimed at.

Let

Let any Man that has but the least impression of Religion upon his Mind, consider the Vale-diction, and declare his Opinion, whether it answer that Character of Piety and Chastity which some Men will have K. *Charles* the first to have been endowed with. There's no Man can deny but it has an amorous Tendency, and must of necessity leave quite another impression upon the Minds of the Hearers, than the blessing which they heard pronounced at Church after Sermon ought to have done, and that the whole Interlude could serve for nothing else but to divert their Meditations from whatever was serious; and therefore the setting up of Masks, and Sports and Pastimes upon *Sundays* and Holydays, was one of the most effectual Methods that the Enemies of Piety could have invented, to hinder the effect of those Ordinances, which the Church of *England* looks upon as necessary to promote the Salvation of her People.

C A P. III.

The Stage Encouraged by the King, and Arch-bishop Laud's Book of SPORTS.

YEET this was not all that the then Head of the Church, King *Charles* the first, and *Laud*, the Metropolitan of all *England*, did to run down the practice of Piety and Religion. They were not satisfied to corrupt the People only by bad Example, but enjoin'd also the Book of *Sports and Pastimes* to be read by the Bishops and their Clergy, and took off the restraint that was laid upon the People from following

lowing such Practices by the Laws then in being ; particularly the 1st of Car. Cap. 1. and 3d Car. Cap. 2. *Forbiding all Sports or Pastimes whatsoever on the Lord's Day* : In the first it is complained of, *That the Holy keeping of the Lord's Day, in very many Places of this Realm, hath been and now is profaned and neglected by a disorderly sort of People, in exercising and frequenting Bearbaiting, Bullbaiting, Interludes, Common-plays, and other Unlawful Exercises and Pastimes.* Yet the King contrary to his own Law, sets up Interludes and Masks in his Pallace on *Sundays* ; and by his Declaration for Sports and Pastimes on *Sundays*, does perfectly dispense with the said Law, and reflects severely upon those that would hinder the People in the Exercise of such Sports and Pastimes as Puritans and Precisians ; and Arch-bishop Laud, and the governing part of the Church join'd with him in prosecuting Mr. *Prin* for his *Histriomastix*, wherein he writ against those Plays and Interludes, (especially such as were acted on *Sundays*) and were so embittered against him that on Feb. 1. 1632. *Laud* procured him to be sent close Prisoner to the Tower, where he lay till the 21st of *June*, 1633. when an Information without mentioning any particular Passages in his Book, was exhibited against him in the *Star-Chamber*, for publishing a Book concerning Interludes, Entituled, *Histriomastix*, which was Licensed by a Chaplain of Dr. *Abbots*, Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*. Notwithstanding which License he had this heavy Sentence pass'd upon him, viz. To be imprisoned during Life, pay 5000*l.* Fine, be expell'd *Lincolns-Inn*, disabled to exercise the profession of a Barrister, degraded by the University of *Oxford* of his degrees taken there ; and that done to be set in the Pillory at *Westminster*, and have one of his Ears cut off ; and at another time to

to be set in the Pillory in *Cheapside*, and there to have his other Ear cut off, which was accordingly executed on the 7th and 10th of *May*; and he remained sundry Years in the Tower upon this Censure, though the Queen is said to have interceded earnestly for the Remission of this Sentence, which was *Tyramical* to the highest degree, considering the Laws before-mentioned against Stage-plays, declaring the Actors to be Rogues, &c. as is evident from the 39th of *Eliz.* and the 7th of King *James* the First.

Having been so successful against Mr. *Prin*, *Laud* and his Faction took Courage and prevailed with His Majesty to publish his Declaration concerning Recreations on the Lord's Day after Evening Prayer, dated *Oktob.* 18. in the Ninth Year of his Reign, which was 1634.

It is observable, That he Founds this Declaration on one of his Father King *James*, in *Anno 1618.* wherein it is said, 'That when that Prince returned from *Scotland* he found his Subjects, but chiefly those in *Lancashire*, debarred from Lawful Recreations on Sundays after Evening Prayer, for which he rebuked the Puritans, and published his Declaration, That none should thereafter prohibit his good Subjects from using their Lawful Recreations on that day. — He adds in another part of it, 'That his County of *Lancashire* to his great Regret, had more Popish Recusants than any other County in *England*; but being informed by his Judges and the Bishop of the Diocese, that they were beginning to amend, he was very sorry to hear the general Complaint of his People, that they were debarr'd from all lawful Recreations and Exercises on *Sunday*, after the ending of all Divine Service: Which could not but produce two Evils, viz. the Hindering the Conversion of many, whom their Priests will persuade, that

' there is no honest Mirth or Recreation allowed in
 ' our Religion, and the setting up of filthy Tip-
 ' pling and Drinking and breeds a number of idle
 ' and discontented Speeches on those days. His
 ' express Pleasure therefore was, that no lawful
 ' Recreation should be barr'd to his good People,
 ' and that the Bishops should take strict order with
 ' all Puritans and Precisians, and either constrain
 ' 'em to conform themselves or to leave the Coun-
 ' try. — And that his Pleasure was, that his good
 ' People should not be hindered after the end of
 ' Divine Service on Sundays, from their lawful Re-
 ' creations, such as Dancing either Men or Women,
 ' Archery, Leaping, Vaulting, nor from having of
 ' Maygames, Whitson-ales, Morrice-dances, and
 ' setting up of Maypoles, or other Sports there-
 ' with used, and he barr'd from those Sports, all
 ' Recusants that abstain'd from coming to Church
 ' and Divine Service, and those that, though
 ' they conformed in Religion did not come to
 ' Church.

Were the place proper for it, this Declaration affords a large Field for Reflections. Here's the Platonick KING! [*The Head of the Church!*] The first (as some say) to whom they gave the Title of *Most Sacred Majesty!* who, to Convert the Papists, as he pretends, orders the Lord's Day to be profaned with such Sports and Pastimes as tended to debauch the Morals of the People, and yet will not shew the least favour to the stricter sort of Protestants, but brands them with the Nick-names of Puritans and Precisians, and Orders his Bishops to bring them to Conformity, or to expel them the Country. But the pleasantest Jest is this, That he invites them to come to Church, by the tempting Reward of having Liberty to profane the Sabbath, which they perfectly abhor'd.

The Stage Encouraged by the Book of Sports. 35

His Son King *Charles I.* Corroborates this Declaration by his of the 18th of Oct. 1634. which he begins thus,

' Now out of the like pious Care for the Service of God, and Suppressing any Humours that oppose Truth, and for the Ease, Comfort and Recreation of our well-deserving People, we do Ratifie and Publish this our Blessed Fathers Declaration.

This Declaration did but too much verifie what an old Reverend Divine of the Church of *Scotland* said to King *James I.* when he asked his Blessing on his Journey, to take upon him the Crown of *England*, viz. *Pray God bless you Sir, and make you a good Man, but he has ill stuff to make it of.*

The Declaration adds, — ' We command that no Mando Trouble or Molest any of Our Loyal People, in or from their Lawful Recreations; and We further Will, that Publication of this Our Command, be made by Order of the Bishops through all the Parish-Churches of their several Diocesses respectively.

Here was a great difference betwixt the Exercise of the Episcopal Function in the Reigns of the Father and the Son: or by this Declaration Ch. I. made the Bishops Trumpeters to the Stage, and King *James II.* said, that in his Time they were Trumpeters of Rebellion, because they petitioned against Reading the Declaration for Liberty of Conscience. This Declaration for *Sports* was read by most of them; and such of the Ministers as would not conform, were turned out till the

36 The Stage Encouraged by the Book of Sports.

Controversies betwixt the King and Parliament, and the Civil War that ensued put a stop to it.

Thus I have made it plain, That the governing part of the Church patroniz'd the Stage in the Reign of Charles I. and by the Book call'd *Centuries of scandalous Ministers*, we find, that many of them were turned out for frequenting the Stage in the Parliament Times, and the Theatre being then overturned, there was so great a Reform of Manners, that notwithstanding the Libertinism which usualy accompanies War, one might have walk'd through the City and Suburbs without hearing an Oath; but when King Charles II. was restored, the Play-houses were speedily re-opened, and without any Publick Check or Control from the Church, went on to that height of Immorality, which Mr. C. complains of. Nay, they were thought very subservient to support the Church by jerk-ing at the Whigs and Dissenters in their Prologues and Plays, and to infuse frightful Ideas of them into the Heads of the Spectators, whilst at the same time they run down the belief of the Popish Plot, vindicated the Traitors that had been executed for it, and dress'd the true Patriots of our Religion and Liberty in the Skins of Beasts of prey, that they might be devoured with the better Appetite. It were easie to cram a Volume with Instances of this sort, but they are so well known, that 'tis needless. There being no Body who frequented the Play-house or read the Plays in the two last Reigns, but know, that the Stage was attempered to the Lascivious and Arbitrary Humours of those Princes, and to blacken all those that opposed their Tyrannical Designs.

Having thus made it appear that the Church hath favoured the Stage, by their not warning the People against it, by seeming to hallow the Phrase

Phrase of it in their Pulpits, by approving or at least conniving at the practise of it on the Sabbath in King *Charles I.* by prosecuting those who writ against it, Writing Plays themselves, by some of them practising it in their own Persons, and Writing in Defence of it, by enjoining the Book of *Sports*, by not opposing it in the Reigns of *Charles II.* and *James II.* and (to which I shall add) by their not opposing it in this Reign, when they might have hopes of better success, seeing both King and Parliament have declared themselves so highly against Immorality and Profaneness : I come now in the next place to see how far the Schools are chargeable with the same Crime.

C A P. IV.

The Stage Encouraged by the Schools.

THIS Subject hath not been so much treated on as the former, and by Consequence is a sign that the danger of it, hath not been so much perceived, yet it hath not been altogether over-look'd, for Authors both Antient and Modern have taken Notice of it : (a) *Clemens Romanus*, (b) *Nazianzen*, (c) *Tertullian*, (d) *Ambrose*, (e) *Jerom*, (f) *Lactantius*, (g) *Augustine*, and others of the Antients : The 4th Council of *Carthage* (h) and divers other Councils. Bishop *Babington*, Bishop *Hooper*, *Perkins*, *Downham*, *Williams*, and all other Commentators on the 7th Commandment have Condemned and Forbid the Writing, Printing, Selling or Teaching any Amorous Wanton Play-books, Histories or Heathen Authors, especially *Ovid's* wan-

(a) *Constitu.*
Apost. l. i.
c. 8. (b) *de Regta Edu.*
ad Selucum.
p. 1063.
(c) *de Ido-lolat.* c. 18.
(d) *in Luc.*
(e) *Epist.*
22. cap. 13.
(f) *de falsa Relig.* c. 12.
15. (g) *de Civit. Dei.*
1. 2. c. 1. 8.
(h) *Can. 16.*

ton Epistles and Books of Love, *Catullus*, *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, *Martial*, *Plautus*, and *Terence*, as may be seen in the Places quoted in the Margin.

The Reasons why they should not be read by

**De Regum Institut. l.4. p.120.* Youth are giv'n us by *Oforius*, (*) thus : ‘ The

‘ Poets are Obscene, Petulant, Effeminate, and by
 ‘ their Lascivious and impure Verses, divert the
 ‘ Mind from Shamfastness and Industry to Lust and
 ‘ Sloth ; and so much the smoother they are, so
 ‘ much the more Noxious, and like so many
 ‘ Syrens ruine all those that give Ear to them :
 ‘ The more ingeniously any of them write on
 ‘ amorous Subjects, they are so much the more
 ‘ Criminal ; for we willingly Read and easily
 ‘ Learn by Heart a Fine and Elegant Poem ; and
 ‘ therefore the Poison of Lascivious Verse makes
 ‘ a quick and speedy Impression upon the Mind ;
 ‘ and by the Smoothness and Elegancy of the
 ‘ Language kills, before an Antidote can be ap-
 ‘ plied. Therefore all such Poets ought not only to
 ‘ be banished the Court but also the Country.

Nay, *Aeneas Silvius*, afterwards Pope *Pius II.* in his Treatise of Education, dedicated to *Laszlau* King of *Hungary* and *Bohemia*, Discoursing what Authors and Poets are to be read to Children, resolves it thus:

‘ Ovid writes many times in a Melancholly
 ‘ Strain, and as often Sweetly ; but is in most
 ‘ places too Lascivious. *Horace*, though an Au-
 ‘ thor of admirable Eloquence, yet has many
 ‘ things I would neither have Read nor expoun-
 ‘ ded to you. *Martial* is a Pernicious, tho’ Florid
 ‘ and Ornate Poet, but so full of Prickles, that his
 ‘ Roses are not to be gathered without danger.
 ‘ Those who write Elegies are altogether to be
 ‘ kept up from the Boys ; for they are too Soft
 ‘ and Effeminate. *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, *Catullus*
 ‘ and

and Sappho, which we have now translated, abound with amorous Subjects, and are full of complaints of unfortunate Amours. Your Preceptor ought to take special Care, that whilst he reads the Comical and Tragical Poets to you, he does not seem to instruct you in something that's Vitious.

It is still more remarkable, that Ignatius Loyola, the Founder of the Order of the Jesuites, who are as little recommendable to the World for their Chastity, as for their other Vertues, forbade the Reading of Terence in Schools to Children and Youth, before his Obscenities were expunged, lest he should more corrupt their Manners by his Wantonness, than help their Wits by his * Latin.

* Maffæus in
Vit. Ignat.
l. 4. c. 8.

The Jews, a People noted enough for their Uncleanness, yet did not permit their Children and Youth, in Antient Times, to read the Canticles, till they arrived at 30 Years of Age, for fear they should draw those Spiritual Passages of the Love betwixt Christ and his Church, to a Carnal Sence, and make them Instruments of inflaming their own Lusts: And upon the same Account Origen + Homil in adviseth such as are of an amorous Temper, to Gant. Proem forbear Reading it. + In the last word vsc. in Ezech.

How much more Reason is there to forbid the Reading of the Lascivious Heathen Poets, and Plays, seeing it is found to be true by Experience, as Agrippa in his Discourse of Uncleanness, hath excellently expressed it, 'That there is no more powerful Engine to attaque and vanquish the Chastity of any Matron, Girl or Widow, or of any Male or Female whatever, than the Reading of Lascivious Stories or Poems. There's none of them, let their Disposition be never so good, but are in danger of being corrupted by this Method, and I should look on it as next akin to a Mirac-
D 4 racle,

* *De Vanit. Scienti.*
cap. 64.

racle, if there were any Virgin or Matron so Religiously Chast, as not to have their Lusts inflamed almost to madness by Reading such kind of Books and Poems *.

In this Case even the Heathen Lecher *Ovid*, who is much more ingenuous than our pretended Christian Poets, gives Judgment against his own Amorous POEMS, and those of *Tibullus*, &c.

Eloquar in vitus, teneros ne tange Poetas,
Summoneo dotes impias esse meas,
Callimachum fugito, non est inimicus amoris
Et cum Callimacho tu quoque Coe Noces.
Carmina quis potuit tuto legisse Tibulli,
Vel tua cuius opus Cynthea sola fuit,
Quis potuit lecto durus discedere Gallo
Et mea nescio quid carmina tale sonant.

De Remedio amoris. lib. 3. p. 230.

It will appear plain from the very Nature and Design of Christian Schools, That such things ought not to be taught in them. The end of all such Schools is to teach Wisdom and Virtue, that we may know God and our selves; and how to Worship God aright: whereas the quite contrary is taught by those Authors. *Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aristophanes, Virgil, Horace*, and the rest of those Heathen Authors, arriv'd to that height of Impiety and Madness, that they feign'd such lewd things to be acted by their Gods, as a modest Man cannot but be ashamed to rehearse before Youth; for they represent their Gods and Goddesses to be such, as no honest or well-governed Common-wealth, would have admitted them for Citizens, so that *Palingenius* writes truly of them.

In cælo est Meretrix, in cælo est turpis adulter.

Lib. I.

There's no doubt but the Heathen Poets were influenced by Satan, to feign such Monstrous and Horrid Things concerning their Deities, that they might thereby promote and Authorize Whoredom and Uncleanness among Men, and add Fewel to the Flames of Corrupt Nature. Certainly those Fables in *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, concerning the Amours, nay, Rapes of the Gods and others, cannot leave any Chast Impressions upon the Minds of Youth. What a fulsom Expression is that of *Virgil, Aneid. 7. Mista Deo Mulier.* The danger of teaching such things to Youth was seen by the very Heathen Philosophers: And therefore *Plato* says, 'That those fabulous Stories of the Poets, 'were not to be receiv'd into a City, as if the 'Gods wag'd War, and form'd Ambushes against 'one another, &c. whether they be taken in an 'Allegorical Sense or not; For Children (says he) 'cannot distinguish betwixt what is spoke figura- 'tively or otherwise, and such Opinions as they 'drink in when they are young, they can hardly 'ever lay aside. To feign that God, who is alto- 'gether Good, is the Cause of Evil, is an Error 'that ought to be refuted; and therefore the Poets 'should be compelled to write and speak things * Lib. de Re-
pub. 2.

That same Author says in *Theage*, 'I know not 'what any Man in his Right Wits, ought to be 'more solicitous about, than how to have his 'Son made as good as possible; and therefore he 'advises, that care be taken that Nurses don't en- 'tertain them with old Wives Fables, lest they 'be corrupted with Madness and Folly from their 'very Infancy.

Seeing

Seeing those poor Heathens who had nothing but the Light of Nature to direct them, could give such excellent Precepts, what a shame is it for Christian Schoolmasters to spend more time in teaching their Youth who *Jupiter*, *Vulcan*, *Neptune* and *Saturn* were, than who *Jesus Christ* is, and to teach them those Lascivious Heathen Poets in direct Opposition to the Seventh Command.

* *Cap. 15.* St. *Augustine* in his Book of *Confession**, cries out, ‘ Oh that when I was a young Man, I had been instructed in profitable Books ! Whilst I was a Youth at School I heard them talk of *Jupiter*, ‘ darting Thunder and committing Adultery at the same time.

The Jews were commanded to teach the Laws of God to their Children diligently, to talk of them when they sat in their Houses, when they walked by the way, when they lay down and when they rose up, to write them upon the Posts of their Houses and on their Gates, *Deut. 6. 6, 7, 9.* The Royal Prophet *David* taught them, That young Men were to purifie their way, by taking heed thereunto according to the Word of God, *Psal. 119. 9.* And the wise King *Solomon* commanded Children to be *trained up in the Way that they should go, and when they were old they would not depart from it*, *Prov. 22. 6.* The Apostle enjoys, that our Children should be brought up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, *Eph. 6. 4.* And commands *Timothy* to avoid Profane and old Wives Fables, *1 Tim. 4. 7.*

The only Objection of any weight that can be raised against this, is, That in those Heathen Poets there are abundance of excellent Moral Sentences, and that Youth learn the Purity of the Latine Tongue from them. To which it may be answer'd, That put them all together, they come infinitely short

hort of those Moral Instructions that are to be found in the *Proverbs of Solomon*, and the *Ecclesiastes*, that its evident what Moral Sayings of worth, any of those Heathen Authors have, they borrow'd them from *Moses* and others of the divinely inspired Writers, and we may with more safety and purity drink from the same Fountains, than from their polluted Streams ; And as for the purity of the Latine Tongue, it may as well be learnt from others, as from the Poets. The *Roman Histories* are excellent for that end ; and if their Poets were purg'd from their Obscenities, &c. and so put into the Hands of Youth, there could be nothing to object against 'em. Nor are there wanting excellent Latine Poems by Christian Authors, which might be equally serviceable for instructing our Youth in the purity of the Latine Tongue, and inspring them also with true Christian Sentiments, such as the famous Antient Poems of *Terrullian*, *Arator*, *Apollinaris*, *Nazianzen*, *Prudentius*, *Prosper* and other Christian Worthies, and the later ones of *Du Bartas*, *Beza*, *Scaliger*, *Buchanan*, *Hensius*, &c.

That a Reform of the Schools in this Point hath been so long neglected, reflects Shame upon the Church who ought to have chiefly concerned themselves in it, and is one main Reason why so many Persons of good parts have applied themselves to write for the Stage, and that too with more Wantonness and Latitude than most of the Heathen Poets ever dar'd to allow themselves : and the Corruption hath spread so far as to infect our Universities, who tho' formerly they condemned the Stage, are now become its Admirers, and to the Scandal of the Nation, obscene Poems are writ at their Publick Acts.

C A P. V.

*An Answer to M. Motteuxes Defence of the
S T A G E.*

ICome next to consider what is offer'd in Defence of the Stage, by a Divine of the Church of *England*, from the Authority of a Divine of the Church of *Rome*, viz. by Father Caffaro, Divinity Professor at Par^s, as I find it annex'd to Mr. Motteuxes Play call'd, *Beauty in Distress*.

Before I come directly to the Point, it may not be improper to observe, that considering the palpable Influence, which the Stage hath had upon the Corruption of Manners, so much complained of. It seems no very suitable Employment for one Divine of the Church of *England* to espouse the Defence of the Stage against another. Nor is it very much for the Defendants Honour to make use of Arrows from a Popish Quiver; for we have no Reason to think that a Popish Divine will be a Cordial Enemy to the Stage; when the Worship of their Church does so much resemble the Pomp of the Theatre.

The Doctors first Argument is, *That the Scripture has no express and particular Precept against PLAYS,* [Page 10.] Which admitted to be True, is an Argument of no Weight; for Consequences naturally deduc'd from Scripture, have the same Authority with the Text, otherwise it could never be a Rule of Faith and Manners, there being

being many thousands of things for which it serves as a Rule, that it doth not particularly express: So that the Doctors Argument would be equally serviceable to the Great Turk: There's no Express nor particular Precept against receiving *Mahomet*, as a Prophet *ergo*. But it is Naturally and Plainly infer'd from the Scriptures, that because we are not to receive any other Doctrine than is there taught us, therefore we are not to receive *Mahomer* as a Prophet.

By Consequences of like force, and every whit as plain, we shall find Stage-Plays condemned in Scripture; I mean not only those that are guilty of Immorality, Profaneness, Blasphemy, &c which the greatest Patrons of the Stage, will not offer to defend, but even Stage-Plays in general, whose Busines they will have it to be, to recommend Virtue and discountenance Vice, which I think will be very plain by the following Argument.

That which God hath appointed sufficient Means to Accomplish: It is Unlawful for Men to appoint other Means to Accomplish: But God hath appointed sufficient Means for Recommending Virtue, and Discountenancing Vice without the S T A G E: Ergo, It is Unlawful for Men to appoint the Stage for Recommending Virtue and Discountenancing Vice.

All the Controversie will lie about the first Proposition; but I think there's no Man who has a serious Impression of the infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God upon his Mind, that will call it in Question, seeing he must necessarily by so doing, cast a Reflection upon all those Attributes, and prefer the Wisdom, Power and Goodness

Goodness of Man, to the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of G O D.

The second Proposition is clear from express Texts of Scripture. The Apostle tells us, *That Magistracy is the Ordinance of God : That Rulers are ordained by him to be a Terror to evil Works, and to Praise those that do good : And that they are the Ministers of God, continually attending upon this very thing,* Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Whence it is evident, That the Original End and Design of Magistracy, is to Encourage Virtue and to Punish Vice.

And hence it is equally clear, That seeing Commanding is a Species of Reward, and Lashing and Exposing a sort of Punishment, the pretended Service of the Stage, for those Ends is wholly needless ; God having sufficiently provided for that, by appointing Magistrates.

This being so, the Patrons of the Stage have no other Pretences left them, but such as Mr. Collier enumerates briefly in his Introduction, *viz.*
 ‘That the Stage is useful to shew the uncertainty
 ‘of Humane Greatness ; The sudden turns of
 ‘Fate, and the unhappy Conclusions of Violence
 ‘and Injustice ; To expose the Singularities of
 ‘Pride and Fancy ; To make Folly and Falshood
 ‘Contemptible ; And to bring every thing that is
 ‘Ill, under Infamy and Neglect.

But we are infinitely better provided for those Ends, by *the Word of G O D*, and *the Ordinance of the Ministry*. We are taught, That the former is able to *make us wise unto Salvation : Is given us by Inspiration of God, for Doctrine, Reproof, Correction and Instruction in Righteousness ; that we may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good Works,* 2 Timoth. 2. So that we have no need of the Instruction of the Stage, for any of the Ends above-mentioned.

Are

Are any of our Authors for the Theatre, able to give such a Description of the Uncertainty of Humane Greatness and the Vanity of all sub-lunary Things, as *Solomon* hath given in his *Ecclesiastes*?

Can any of them give us more surprizing Instances of the sudden Turns of Fate and Revolutions of Providence, than the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, of *Pharaoh* and his *Host*, *Sennacherib* and his Army, and many others related in the Scriptures, with reference not only to the Publick, but to particular Persons? Nay, are we not infinitely better accommodated with real Instances of that Nature, ev'n from profane History, than we possibly can be from their forged ones on the Stage?

Can our Poets shew us more unhappy Conclusions of Violence and Injustice, than those that attended *Pharaoh* and the other Tyrants that persecuted the People of God?

Are they able to give us Instances of the Singularity of Pride and Tyranny, equal to those of that same *Pharaoh*, who said, *Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?* Of *Nebuchad-nezzer*, who for his Pride was turn'd a grazing with the Beasts of the Field? Or of *Herod*, who for his Fantastical Apparel and Pride was eat up of Worms?

Are they able to expose Folly and Falshhood to more Contempt, than the Sacred Scripture does, which tells us, *That a Poor and a Wise Child, is better than an Old and a Foolish King*, Eccl. 4. 13. And that tho' the Bread of Deceit and Falshood be sweet to a Man, yet afterward his Mouth shall be fill'd with Gravel, Prov. 20. 17.

Hath not God appointed the Ministry, To teach all Nations to observe whatsoever he hath commanded, Matth. 28. 19. To distinguish betwixt the

Precious

Precious and the Vile, Jer. 15. 19. To use sharpness according to the Power that God hath given them, 2 Corinth. 13. 8, 9, 10. To be instant in Season and out of Season; To Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort; To Teach us to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts; and to live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present Evil World, Tit. 2. 12.

Thus the second Proposition is plainly proved, *That God hath provided sufficient Means for Recommending Virtue and Discountenancing Vice without the STAGE: Ergo it is Unlawful to Appoint the Stage for Recommending Virtue and Discountenancing Vice.*

It may perhaps be objected, That by this Argument the Exhortations and Reproofs of Parents, Masters and Neighbours, are also prov'd to be needless: To which the Answer is ready, That those Duties are enjoyn'd by the Scriptures on Parents, Masters and Neighbours; therefore 'tis the Ministers Duty to urge them, and the Magistrates Duty to see them perform'd; but no such thing can be said of the Stage.

It may perhaps be further objected, That the Magistrate being left at Liberty, as to the *Means of Recommending Virtue and Discountenancing Vice*, he may appoint the Stage for that End. To which I Answer; The Magistrate is infinitely better provided of Means already: He hath the Ministers to preach the Gospel from the Pulpit; and Judges to explain his Laws from the Bench; and is provided with a Sword to protect Virtue and punish Vice.

And therefore to spend Time and Money in that which is needless, would be not only contrary to Scripture Rule, but to Common-sense. Nor can the Patrons of the Stage, give us an Instance, that ever any Magistrate appointed the Stage for those Ends they mention.

We

We are told in the Introduction to *Britania Triumphans*, Acted on a Sunday at Whitehall in 1637. as before-mentioned, ‘ That Princes of ‘ Sweet and Humane Natures have ever, both ‘ amongst the Antients and Moderns in the best ‘ times presented Spectacles and Personal Repre- ‘ sentation to recreate their Spirits, wasted in ‘ Grave Affairs of State, and for the Entertain- ‘ ment of their Nobility, Ladies and Courts. That was the only End, according to the then Poets, that the Stage pretended to ; but now it seems that they would usurp, both upon the Bench and the Pulpit.

C A P. VI.

The Fathers against the Stage ; and mistaken by Aquinas.

TH E next Argument is * from *Thomas Aquinas*, who in his *Question of Sports and Diversions* says, *That 'tis the part of a wise Man sometimes to unbend his Mind by diverting Words or Actions*: Whence the Dr. concludes, *That St. Thomas approv'd the Drama.*

This Man may perhaps be a Professor of Divinity, but it would seem he was never a Professor of Logick, else he would not put more into the Conclusion than is found in the Premises, as here he has done, except he can prove that there are no diverting Words or Actions but in Plays ; and the straining of this Conclusion is so much the

more needless, that he brings in *Aquinas* afterwards, expressly giving his Opinion for Plays, provided the Players and Spectators be not guilty of Excess, or Speak and Act nothing that is Unlawful, &c. (pag. 12.)

But as the Dr. brings in *Aquinas* to reconcile the Fathers with the School-men in this Point; or indeed rather to contradict the Fathers by the School-men; what if we bring in *Aquinas* contradicting the Dr. himself.

If either the Paris Doctor, or the Doctor of the Church of England, who applauds his Performance, please to look into *Aquinas* his Secunda, Secundæ Quæst. 168. Art. 3. ad 3m. it will appear, That they make the Angelical Dr. speak otherwise than he really does: *Aquinas*'s words are, *Si qui autem superflue sua in tales consumunt vel etiam sustentant illos Histriones qui illicitis Ludis utuntur, peccant, quasi eos in peccato soventes,* unde *Augustinus dicit super Iohannem, quod donare res suas Histriónibus, vitium est immane, non virtus, nisi forte aliquis Histrio esset in extrema necessitate, in qua esset ei subveniendum,* dicit enim *Ambrosius in Libro de Officiis, pasce fame Moriētē. Quisquis enim pascendo hominem Servare poteris si non paveris Occidisti.*

It's plain, that the Paris Dr. or his Translator make *Aquinas* say what he never intended. The Angelical Dr. says, It is a Crime to give *superfluously or lavishly to Stage Players.* But it seems nothing is Criminal with the Parisian Dr. or his Englisher, except they give them *their whole Estates.* Befides, they injure St. Austin mightily. They would make the World believe, That the African Father was only against giving whole Estates to Players too; when the honest Man says expressly, That to give any thing to a Stage-Player except at the Point of Starving, is a monstrous Crime

The Fathers against the Stage.

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Crime or First-rate Sin, *Immane Vitium*, and the Reason of the Exception he brings from St. *Ambrose*, ‘ That whosoever is in a Condition to give a Man Bread, and yet lets him starve, kills him. And how well *Aquinas* reconciles the School-men with the Fathers, in this Point of the Stage, may be seen by the very following Article, where he quotes St. *Augustine* in his Book of *True and False Repentance*; charging those that would obtain Forgiveness, to abstain from the Plays and Shows of the Age : Which being compared with his former Advice, *not to give any thing to the Stage-Player, except he were at the point of starving*, shews plainly for all the Angelical Doctors nice Distinction (of St. *Augustine*'s only forbidding Plays to Men under Pennance) that he wrests his Words. The Truth of which will be prov'd by St. *Austin* himself, who says, ‘ That had there been none but honest Men in *Rome*, they would never have admitted Stage-Plays †. And else-
where he says, ‘ The *Roman* Virtue knew nothing of those Theatrical A&ts for almost 400 Years ; and when they were introduc'd for the Recreation of Sensualists, and admitted by the dissolute Morals of the time, the Heathen Idols desired they might be dedicated to them *.

† *De Civit. Dei. l. 4. c. 1.*

* *Ib. l. 2. c. 13.*

He likewise takes notice, ‘ That being brought into *Rome* to asswage the Plague which afflicted their Bodies, the crafty Devils who knew that the Disease would in its proper time come to a Period, did thence take occasion to infect their Morals, with a far greater Contagion. And adds, ‘ That their Pontif *Scipio* dreaded that Plague and Infection upon their Minds, when he forbade the Building of Theatres, well knowing that the Re-publick could not be preserved by the standing of their Walls, if their Morals failed ; but they were more prevailed on by the Allure-

The Fathers against the Stage.

ments of Impious Devils, than by the Pre-
 * *Ibid. l. i.* cautions of Provident Statesmen *.

c. 32, 33 Nor is there any of the Fathers more Pathetical and Pressing in their Exhortations to Christians to avoid the Stage, than this Excellent Person, as may be seen in his *Homilies*, and other Writings.

Then as to the whim of the Revelation to *Paphnutius*, That a certain Player should be his Partner in Glory, by which *Aquinas* would prove that Players are not in a State of Sin. However it may relish with the *Paris Doctor*, it sounds but ill to be quoted by a Divine of the Church of *England*; But admitting the Revelation to be true, it will not prove what they would have it, for the Player mentioned, might have abandoned the Stage, and become a true Penitent; otherwise by this way of arguing, Thieves may conclude, that they are not in a State of Sin, because our Saviour said to one on the Cross, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*.

Besides, *Aquinas*'s Words are, *Quod quidam Foculator futurus erat sibi Consors in vita futura*. Now the Doctor knows, that *Foculator* and *Histrion*, are not convertible Terms. There are many Jocose Men, that would think the Stage below them; or if *Foculator* must needs be a Stage-Player, let it be translated the *Merry Andrew*, or *Fool* in the Play; there's no reason why such should be denied the Benefit of *Paphnutius*'s Evidence for Heaven, it being but seldom, that their part of the Play is the most Criminal.

In the next Place, it ought to be observed what sort of Plays they are, which St. *Thomas* approves; he says, *Officium Histrionum quod ordinatur ad solatium hominibus Exhibendum non est secundum se illicitum. ibid. ad 3m. i.e. That Stage-Plays which are directed to recreat or solace Men, are*

are not unlawful in themselves. This is quite another Work than our Stage now assumes to it self, as Mr. Collier mentions in his Introduction; and had the Stage held there, and been regular and moderate in its practice, it would not have been so culpable as now it is, but all this is merely a covering its Nakedness with Fig-leaves; that was not the Original Design of the Stage. It was invented by the Devil, if we may believe *Tertullian* *, and therefore hath all along been * *De spe-
tac.cap.24.* true to its Founder in pursuing its primary Design of Debauching instead of Diverting Man to 28. kind.

Before I go further, I must observe two Things; The first is, That St. *Thomas* however, condemns the present practice of the English Stage, in jesting with Scripture, using obscene Words or Actions, and Men and Womens putting on Apparel of the contrary Sex †. And the next is, That it looks + *Ib. Art. 2.* somewhat odd that a Dr. of the Church of *Rome*, and a Divine of the Church of *England*, *ad im.art 3 Rep.* should offer to shake the Authority of the Fathers *Prima se-
cunda, q. 102. art. 6.* for the sake of the Play-house, seeing they are *ad sextum* the principal Quivers, whence the former draws *secunda se-
cunda, q. 162. art. 2,3.* the latter pulls Darts to hurl against the Pyritans.

In the next place they bring us St. *Thomas*'s Answer to *Chrysostom*, which they will have to be sufficient to all the Passages of the Fathers, *viz.* That they declaim only against the Excess in Plays †; because the Excess of the *Drama* in * *Beauty
in distress,* their time, was Criminal and Immoderate. *page 4.*

To this let St. *Chrysostom* Answer for himself; And we shall soon see whether he had any Reason to peep down from Heaven, and tell *Aquinas*, *Bene Scripsisti de me Thoma*, as they foolishly

St. Chrysostom against the Stage.

tell us our Saviour did to that same Angelical Doctor.

St. Chrysostom against the STAGE.

He calls Stage-Plays, *The Devils Solemnities or Pomps*; *Satanical Fables, Diabolical Mysteries*,

* Hom. de the impure Food of Devils, Hellish Conventicles *.

David & Saul. Tom. 1. Col. 511. And tells his Hearers, ‘ That if they continue to go to Plays, he will never give over, but use a sharper Stile, and wound them deeper, till he Isaie, Vidi had pull’d in pieces the Devilish Theatre, that the Assemblies of the Church might be purified and cleansed.

Tom. 5. Col. 1471. In another place he says, ‘ Every thing acted on the Stage is most Filthy and Obscene, the Words, the Apparel, the Tonsure, the Gestures, the Musick, the Glancings of the Eyes, nay, the very Subject of the Plays †. Whence they in in Matth. fuse so much Lasciviousness into the Minds of Tom. 2. the Audience, as if they conspired together Col. 298. to root all Modesty out of their Hearts, and to drench them in pernicious Sensuality.

In his *Homily of Saul and David*, he writes thus, ‘ That it is dangerous to go to Stage-Plays, because it makes them compleat Adulterers; wishes he knew who they were that left the Church Yesterday, and went to those Spectacles of Iniquity, that he might Excommunicate them, they having impudently defil’d themselves with Adultery. And if so be (says he) you desire to know the kind of Adultery, I will not rehearse my own Words, but the Words of him who is to be our Judge *: *That Man (saith he) who looks upon a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery in his Heart.* If then a Woman accidentally passing the Street, and but carelessly dress’d doth frequently insnare a Man, with one single

* Matth. 5.

28. upon a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery in his Heart. If then a Woman accidentally passing the Street, and but carelessly dress’d doth frequently insnare a Man, with one single

single look, with what confidence can those that purposely ran to the Play-House, and sit there a whole day together, with their Eyes fix'd on the Faces of Women, say they have not looked upon them, so as to lust after them? where there are the Enticements of Lafcivious Words, whorish Songs, painted Faces, and enticing Dresses to allure the Beholders. — If here where there are *Psalms* and *the Preaching of God's Word*, Concupiscence doth frequently creep in like a crafty Thief, how can those who sit idle in Play-houses, where they neither see nor hear any thing that is good, and where their Eyes and Ears are beset on every side, overcome their Lust? And if they cannot conquer it, how can they be acquitted from the Charge of Adultery? — Then how can those who are chargeable with this Crime, come to these Sacred Assemblies, without Repenrancē. —

If a Servant should put his Nasty and Loufy Apparel, amongst his Masters Rich and Costly Robes, would you bear with it patiently? If he should throw Dung into a Vessel of Gold where your Precious Ointments are kept, would you not Cudgel him for it? Shall we then be so careful of our Cloaths and our Vessels, and put so low a value upon our Souls: Tell me, how you think God can endure this, when there is not so much Difference between Ointment and Dirt, nor the Cloaths of Master and Servant, as betwixt the Grace of the Spirit and this perverse Action? Dost thou not tremble whilst thou beholdest this Holy Table, where dreadful Mysteries are administered, with the self same Eyes that thou didst behold the Bed on the Stage; where the detestable Fables of Adultery are Acted, whilst with the same Ears thou hearest an Adulterer speaking Obscenely, and a Prophet and an Apostle leading

St. Chrysostom against the Stage.

‘ leading thee into the Mysteries of the Scripture,
 ‘ whilst with the same Heart thou receivedst
 ‘ deadly Poison, and this Holy and Blessed Sacra-
 ‘ ment ?

‘ Are not these Plays the Subversion of Life, the
 ‘ Corruption of Manners, the Destruction of Marri-
 ‘ age, the Cause of Wars, of Fightings and Brawls in
 ‘ Houses? When thou returnest from the Stage
 ‘ more Dissolute, Wanton and Effeminate, the sight
 ‘ of thy Wife will be less pleasing to thee, let
 ‘ her be what she will. What do I speak of
 ‘ a Wife or Family , when as afterward thou
 ‘ wilt be less willing to come to Church, and
 ‘ wilt hear a Sermon of Modesty and Chastity
 ‘ with Irksomeness.

‘ Wherefore I intreat you all to avoid the wick-
 ‘ ed Remembrances in Stage-Plays, and to draw
 ‘ back others from them, who have been led unto
 ‘ them; for whatever is there done, is not De-
 ‘ light or Recreation, but Destruction.

‘ In his first *Homily* on *Psalm 50.* speaking of
 ‘ *David*, he saw *Bathsheba* (faith he) was wounded
 ‘ in his Eye, and struck with a Dart. Let them
 ‘ take notice of this who are mad upon Stage-
 ‘ Plays, where they may contemplate the Beauties.
 ‘ Let them observe this, who say they can look
 ‘ upon them without Hurt. *David* was wounded,
 ‘ and are you like to escape? he was overcome,
 ‘ and can I trust to your Strength ? he that had
 ‘ so much Grace was struck through, and dost thou
 ‘ deny that thou art wounded?

‘ In his seventeenth *Homily* on *Matthew 5.* If thy
 Right Eye offend thee ; He writes thus, ‘ Let them
 ‘ take notice of this, who frequent the Playhouse
 ‘ so much, and defile themselves almost daily
 ‘ with Adultery : How can they be defended who
 ‘ by their stay at Playhouses, contract Acquain-
 ‘ tance with Lewd Persons, that they knew not
 ‘ before?

St. Chrysostom against the Stage.

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' before ? Upon *Psalm* 119. v. 151. He says,
' We cannot serve two Masters, but he serves
' two, who goes to Church one Day, and to Stage-
' Plays another. On *Psalm* 4. 2. ' Why do you
' love Vanity in Stage-Plays, and seek after Lea-
' sing in Stage-Players? On *Psalm* 66. 1. No-
' thing brings the Oracles of God into so great
' Contempt, as those Stage-Plays and the Specta-
' cles there shewed; wherefore I have often ex-
' horted you, that none of those who enjoy the
' Divine Doctrine, and partake of the dreadful
' Sacrament, go to those Stage-Plays. Yet some
' are become so mad, that though they profess
' Religion, and are grown white with Old-Age,
' they run to them notwithstanding ; and say, they
' reap much profit from 'em, by seeing Examples of
' the Victory and Crowns which shall be in the
' World to come. But this is a rotten and deceit-
' ful Saying: Whence canst thou reap Profit there,
' from Contentions, from rash Oaths, from the
' Abuses, Reviling and Scoffs which the Spectators
' throw upon one another ?

' In his sixth *Homily* on *Matthew*, he says, God
' never taught Men to Play, but the Devil ; who
' hath formed Jests and Plays into an Art; that
' by these he might draw the Souldiers of Christ
' to himself: He hath erected Theatres in Cities;
' and proposed those Incentives of Laughter and
' Filthy Pleasure. It is not the part of those
' who are called to an everlasting Kingdom, to
' Effeminate themselves with Delight, and let
' loose the Reins to loud Laughter and Derision,
' for those who applaud the Writers of Blasphemous
' and Filthy Things, persuade them to act
' them ; He that Personates those things, doth
' not sin so much as thou that commandest them
' to be done. But thou sayest, this is only feigning
' not committing a Crime, but certainly those Men
' deserve

deserve a thousand Deaths, who are not afraid to Imitate that which all Laws do most strictly forbid. If Adultery be Evil in it self, the Imitation of it must certainly be Unlawful.

I say nothing how many Adulterers they may make, who Personate Adulteries upon the Stage, nor how they render Spectators Impudent; for there is nothing more Filthy nor Lascivious, than that Eye that can patiently behold such Things.

In his thirty eighth Homily on Matthew, He answers the Question: What then shall we shut up the Playhouse? thus, Yea verily: These Stage-Plays being overturned, you shall not overthrow the Law; but Iniquity, and extinguish all the Plagues and Mischiefs of the City? Thou wilt say, shall we then pull down the Playhouses? Would to God they were pulled down; yet I command you not to pull them down; the Magnificence of the Houses may stand, and the Plays and Dancing cease. Take at least Example from the Barbarians, who have none of those Stage-Plays. What Excuse can you bring for your selves, who are registred in Heaven, to be the Companions and Co-heirs with Angels if you be found worse than the Barbarians in this, especially when thou mayst procure to thy self better Comfort elsewhere? for when thou wouldest refresh thy Mind, thou mayest go into Gardens, behold running Rivers, contemplate great Lakes, look upon pleasant Places, &c. thou hast a Wife and Children, thou aboundest in Friends, all which may afford thee Honest Delight and Profit. The Barbarians themselves when they heard of these Stage-Plays, uttered Expressions worthy of the greatest Philosophers; What say they, have the Romans no Wives nor Children? But thou wilt say, these Playhouses do no Hurt. Yes, verily

‘ verily they do, in that thou spendest thy time
‘ there Idlely and to no purpose, and givest cause
‘ of Scandal to others. For though thou by For-
‘ titude and Sublimeness of Mind hast escaped the
‘ Infection, yet by giving Example to others who
‘ are weaker, thou hast occasioned their commit-
‘ ting of Evil.

In his seventy fourth *Homily* on *Matthew*, he says, Many come to Church to behold the Beauties of Men and Women; do ye not therefore wonder, that Thunderbolts are not darted forth on every side? but these things ye have learned from the unchaste Theatre, that most contagious Plague, that unavoidable Snare of Idle Persons. Such is the accursed Fruits of Stage- Plays, not only to make the Playhouse, but the very Church of God a Brothel.

In his sixty ninth *Homily* on that same Evangelist, he expresses himself thus, ‘ Where are those who sit daily in the Playhouse to hear pernicious Songs, and to see the Dances of the Devil. I must say unto you as St. Paul said, *As you have hitherto given up your Members to serve uncleanness, even so now give up your Members as Servants of Righteousness unto Holiness.* Let’s compare the Lives of the Harlots, and corrupt young Men who sit together in the Pits and Boxes, with the Life of those Blessed ones, even as to the Point of Pleasure. We shall find the Difference to be as great betwixt the one and the other, as betwixt the Songs of Angels and the Grunting of Swine wallowing in the Mire. Christ speaks out of the one, but the Devil speaks out of the other. From the Songs of Harlots, a flame of Lust doth presently set the Hearers on fire; and as if the Sight and Face of a Woman were not sufficient to inflame the Mind, they have found out the Plague of Voice too;

' too ; but by the Divine Praises of Holy Men,
' if any such Disease doth vex the Mind, it is
' soon extinguished.

In his 17th *Homily* to the People of *Antioch*, where the Emperor *Theodosius* had shut up the Play-house, he says, ' Would to God it may never be opened again ! Hence the Works of Darkness flow'd out into the City ! Hence came those who were Criminal in their Manners ! But now our City looks like a Beautiful, Fair and Modest Woman. Let us not then lament with Ef-feminate Sorrow, as I have heard many do. Wo unto thee *Antioch* ! What hath befallen thee ? And how art thou depriv'd of Honour ? But when thou shalt see Dancers, Players, Drinkers, Blasphemers, Swearers, Liars, then make use of those Expressions, *Wo unto thee, O Antioch* !

In his 62d *Homily* to that People, he says, ' Prisons are better than Play-houses ; because in the former there is Sorrow, Fear, Humility, &c. but in the latter, there is Laughter, Wantonness, Diabolical Pride, Prodigality, Expence of Time, the Plotting of Adultery, the School of Fornication, the Examples of Lewdness, &c.

There are abundance of other Excellent Things to this purpose, in this Eloquent Fathers *Homilies*, directly against the Stage in general ; but this is enough and more than enough to convict our *Parisian Doctor*, and *Church of England Divine*, of Misrepresenting St. *Chrysostom*, when they say, *He is only against the [Excess] of the Stage* : And I have been the larger upon him, not only to confute that Groundless Assertion, but because his Declamations against the Stage in those Days, look as if they were adapted to the Stage in ours. I shall only add one Observation, That he no where speaks of [Reforming] the Stage, but of Pulling down and Over-turning it, as the Invention of

of the DEVIL, whice he would never have done, had he only thought the Excess of it Culpable.

Tertullian against the STAGE.

The Parisian Doctor will likewise have it, *That Tertullian is only against the [Excess] of Plays*^{*}, ^{* Beauty in distress,} but how truly will quickly be seen from the following Quotations of that Father. ^{p. XV.}

In his Book of *Spectacles* †, he tells us, ‘ That Stage-plays are the Pomps of the Devil, which we renounce at Baptism, because their Original and the Materials of which they are composed, is wholly patch’d up of Idolatry. He calls Play-houses, *The Devils Church and Temple*^{* Cap. 7. 25}, and says †, *We are commanded to put far from us all manner of Uncleanness or Wantonness*; and by consequence are forbid the Theatre, which is a private Conventicle of Lewdness, where nothing is approv’d, but what is disapproved every where else, whose chief Beauty or Grace consists for the most part in Obscenity, which the Stage-Player Acts, and is represented by Females, who have abandoned the Modesty of their Sex. Nay, the very Stews themselves the Sacrifices of Publick Lust, are brought forth on the Stage, and that which is yet worse, in the presence of Women, and Persons of all Ages and Degrees, where the Place, the Hire, and the Incentives to them are represented to those that have no need of such Tentations. Let the Senate be ashamed ! Let all ranks of People blush at this ! — If all Uncleanness ought to be held in Execration by us, can it be lawful for us to hear those Things, which it is unlawful to speak, and seeing we know that all scurrilous Language and Vain Words, are condemned by God,

‘God, how can it be lawful for us to Hear those things, which it is unlawful to Act? Those things which pollute a Man when uttered by his Mouth, must they not pollute him, when they enter into his Soul, with his own consent by his Eyes and Ears? Thou art therefore commanded to abstain from the Stage when thou art forbid to be Unclean.

This Passage is so full, and contains such weighty Arguments against the Theatre, deduc'd from Scripture Consequences, that we may justly wonder at the height of those Clergy-Mens Assurance, who assert that this Father is only against the *Excess* of the Stage, and that it is not forbidden by Scripture because not expressed by Name.

In another place, he says, ‘That Tragedies and Comedies are the Augmenters of Villany and Lust, Bloody, Lascivious, Impious and Wasteful *; They defile the Eye and Ear with Uncleanness †, and blow up the Sparkles of Lust ||: Upon which Account he calls Playhouses, *The Chappels of Venus*; *The Houses of Leachery*, and *Conventicles of Incontinence* *, and informs us, That all the Christians in the Primitive Church had utterly left off frequenting the Theatre ‡.

* *De spe-*
Fac. c. 18.
† *Ib. cap. 17.*
|| *Ibid. cap. 25.*

(*) *Ibid. cap. 10.*

(†) *Apol. adv. Gent. c. 38.*

* *De spe&t. c. 17. & 24.*

He tells us likewise *, ‘That Stage-Plays make the Souls of the Spectators to appear Polluted in the Sight of God, that none of those things deputed unto Stage-Plays, are pleasing unto God, or becoming the Servants of God; because they were all instituted for the Devil, and furnished out of his Treasury, for every thing that is not of God, or displeasing unto him, is of the Devil.— Stage-plays are the Pomp of the Devil, against which we have protested at Baptism. That therefore which we renounce, we ought not to partake of neither in Deed, Word

' Word nor Sight ; and do we not then renounce
 ' and tear off the Seal of Baptism, when we cut
 ' off the Attestation of it ? Shall we ask the very
 ' Heathens themselves, Whether it be lawful for
 ' Christians to frequent Stage-plays ? They will
 ' tell you, that they chiefly know a Man to be a
 ' Christian, by his renouncing the Stage. He there-
 ' fore manifestly denies himself to be a Christian,
 ' who throws off the Badge by which he should
 ' be known. What hope then is there of such
 ' a Man ? There's no Man runs over to the Ene-
 ' mies Camp, but he first throws away his Arms,
 ' forsakes his Colours, and the Allegiance of his
 ' Prince, and resolves to run the same fate with
 ' his Enemies. Will he think earnestly of God there,
 ' where there is nothing at all of God to be heard ?
 ' will he thoroughly learn Chastity who admires
 ' the Stage-Players ? will he remember the Exhor-
 ' tations of the Prophets, amidst the Exclamations
 ' of the Tragedians ? will he think upon Psalms
 ' in the middle of Effeminate Songs ? — Can he
 ' be of a Compassionate Nature, who delights in
 ' the baiting of Bears ?

' Dost thou doubt but at that very Moment
 ' when thou art in the Church of the Devil, all
 ' the Angels look down from Heaven, and take
 ' special notice of every one there present, ob-
 ' serving who he is that speaks Blasphemy, who
 ' it is that hears it, and who they are that lend
 ' their Ears and Tongues to the Devil ? Wilt
 ' thou not therefore flee those Seats of the Ene-
 ' mies of Christ, that Pestilential Chair ; nay and
 ' the very Air over the Place, which is defiled
 ' with filthy Speeches. *

He tells us yet more expressly, ' That the
 ' Scripture hath forbidden all Plays and Inter-
 ' ludes, under the Prohibition of Lewdness and
 ' Lasciviousness ; and that those Texts which con-

* Ib. cap. 25,
26, 27.

demn

St. Cyprian against the Stage.

‘ demn worldly Concupiscence, idle Words, foolish, filthy Talking and Jesting, all standing in the way of Sinners, and sitting in the Seat of the Scornful, together with Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, and the putting on of Womens Apparel by Men, do expressly condemn both Plays themselves, resort to Playhouses, and the Acting and Beholding all Theatrical Interludes. †.

* Ib. c. 17. * This I hope is sufficient to demonstrate to the Reader, that *Tertullian* was against all Stage-Plays and Interludes, not only upon the Account of the Excess or Abuse of them, but also because he looked upon them to be the Inventions of the Devil, and contrary to Scripture: So falsely have the Parisian and English Doctors represented him, in their Preface to *Beauty in Distress*.

St. Cyprian against the S T A G E.

The next that they quote; is St. Cyprian, who they say doth not absolutely condemn *Opera's* and *Comedies*; but only those Shows, that represent

**Beauty in Fables*; after the Manner of the Greeks. *

Distress. How truly this is asserted by the Popish and pag. XVI. Protestant Doctors; let St. Cyprian Inform you himself.

† Epist. I. i. That Father in his Epistles †, writes thus concerning the Stage: ‘ The Stage-Player who still goes on amongst you in his disgraceful Art, is not an Instructor but Destroyer of Youth; that which he hath wickedly learned himself he teaches others; and therefore he writes to Eucratius, That he ought not to be received into Communion; saying, That it was neither consistent with the Majesty of God, nor the Discipline of the Gospel, that the Chastity and Honour of the Church should be defiled with such an Infamous and filthy Contagion. Had St. Cyprian

an approved the Stage as Lawful, he would have advised the Reforming of it, and not to Excommunicate a Man because he was a Stage-Player.

In another place he tells us, ‘That Theatres are the Seats of Uncleanness, the Mastership of Obscenity; which teach those Sins in Publick, that Men may more easily commit them in private: What then hath a Christian to do there?’ says he, to whom it is not so much as lawful to think upon any Vice, should he delight himself in those Representations of Lust, that laying aside his Modesty, he may be the more bold to commit the Crimes themselves: He learns to Act those Crimes, who accustoms himself to see them.

‘Those common Strumpets, whose Misfortunes have prostituted them to the Slavery of the publick Stews, conceal the place; and comfort themselves with this, that their Disgrace is acted in private, and those who have exposed their Chastity to sale, are ashamed to be seen in publick; but this open Wickedness of the Stage, is acted in the View of all Men, where the Impudence of common Prostitutes is surpassed.

‘Therefore it is utterly unlawful for good Christians to be present at those Plays, because we soon accustom our selves to the Practice of that Wickedness which we hear and see: For since the Minds of Men are easily induc’d to those Vices of their own accord: What will they not do, when they have unchaste Examples both of Body and Nature?

Then as to Tragedy. He tell us, ‘That it is a Tragedians part to relate to us in Verse, the Wickedness of the Antients: The Horror of ancient Parricides and Incests are by them represented to the Life, lest those Wicked-

'nesses that were committed in former Ages,
 'should grow Obsolet in the present times, for
 'by this the present Age is Admonished, that
 'whatever Villany was committed in former
 'times, may be committed still. Thus is Adul-
 'tery learned whilst it is beheld; and she who
 'at first came perchance a chaste Matron to the
 'Play, returns unchaste from the Playhouse: What
 'a foul Corruption of Manners, what a Nourish-
 'ment is it to reproachful Actions? and what a
 'Fuel of Vice is it, to be polluted with Histrio-
 'nical Gestures, and to see filthy Incest elaborate-
 'ly acted, against the very Law and Right of Na-
 'ture? ^{† Lib. de spectac. Ep. l. 2. Ep. 2. donato.}

^{† Lib. de spectac. Ep. l. 2. Ep. 2. donato.}

That same Author in another of his Works, says,
 'That many Virgins by frequenting Play-houses
 'blasted the Flower of their Virginity, made
 'shipwreck of their Chastity, and degenerated in-
 'to common Strumpets; being Widows before
 'they were Wives, and Mothers before they had
 'Husbands; whose miserable falls the Church
 'did much lament.*

^{* De habitu Virgin. pag. 242.}

He tells us further, 'That the Scripture hath for-
 'bid, that to be beheld, which it hath forbid to
 'be acted, and hath condemned all those Kinds of
 'Spectacles; when it condemneth Idolatry the
 'Mother of all Plays, and which gave Birth to
 'those Monsters of Lightness and Vanity; and
 'that it might allure Christians to be Idolaters,
 'flatters them with the Pleasures of the Eyes and
 'Ears. *Romulus* at first did consecrate Stage-
 'Plays to *Consus*, as the God of Counsel, for
 'the Sabine Women that were to be ravished;
 'and whatever else there is in Stage-Plays, which
 'either affects the Eyes or pleases the Ears; if
 'its Original be enquired into, hath either an

^{* De spec. Idol or a Devil for its Founder. *}

p. 243, 244

Thus

Thus we see that *Cyprian* agrees with *Tertullian*, that Stage-Plays were invented by the Devil, and are forbid by the Scriptures-

Lactantius against the S T A G E.

Our Doctors in the next place quote *Lactantius* and *Salvian*, as being of Opinion, that 'twas only the Excess and Abuse of the Stage that was Criminal. *. But with how little Reason, we shall see immediately.

Lactantius falls upon Stage-Players in general, p. 14. without exception ; and accuses them of teaching and provoking Lust, by their unchaste Gestures and Actions, and that they resemble unchaste Women by enervating their Bodies, and in their effeminate Pace and Habit. †. They teach Adulteries whilst they feign them, and by counterfeit Representations instruct Men how to commit real Uncleanness. What is it that Young men and Virgins may not be tempted to do? when they see those things acted without a Blush, and willingly beheld by all sorts of People? They are thereby taught what they may do themselves, and have their Lusts inflam'd; which are most readily set on fire by beholding such things: They approve them whilst they laugh at them, and return more corrupt to their Chambers by those Vices, which adhere to them.

Therefore all Shows and Stage-Plays are wholly to be avoided, lest Vice should take Possession of our Hearts, which ought to be calm and quiet, and lest our accustoming our selves to Pleasures should render us effeminate, and turn us away from God and good Works. Those Enterludes and Plays, because they are the greatest Provocatives to Vice, and have a mighty Influence to debauch the Minds of Men, ought to be abolished.

*Beauty in
Distress

† *De Vero
cultu. cap.
20. lib. 6.*

‘*ed*, seeing they are not only useless towards
‘the Happiness of Life, but likewise do a world
‘of Mischief.

<sup>† *Divina-
rum Institu-
tum Epitome,
cap. 6.*</sup> The same Author says elsewhere, ‘What is the Playhouse? is it any thing Holier than those Sword-Plays; when a Comedy treats of Rapes and Amours, and Tragedy of Incests and Murders — . Is not then a Player the corruption of Discipline, should those Youngmen fee those things, whose slippery Youth, which ought to be restrained and govern’d, is instructed to commit Sin and Wickedness by those Representations — . Therefore we ought to fly from all Plays, that we may enjoy Serenity of Mind: Those destructive Pleasures ought to be renounced, lest being delighted with their pestilential Sweetnes, we should thereby fall into the snares of Death.

Salvian *against the STAGE.*

Then as to *Salvian* Bishop of *Marcellus*, his Opinion of Plays is thus delivered by himself [†].

<sup>† *De Gu-
bernatione
Dei, lib. 6.
p. 193, 194.*</sup> In Stage-Plays there’s a certain Apostacy from the Faith; for at Baptism we renounce the Devil, his Pomps, his Spectacles and Works — . How is it then O Christian! that thou dost follow Stage-Plays after Baptism? thou hast once renounced the Devil, and by this thou must needs know, that thou dost return to the Devil, when thou returnest to the Stage.

^{* *Ib. p. 185,*} He tells us in another place, *. Such things are acted at Plays and Theatres, as cannot be thought of, and much less uttered without defilement: For other Vices challenge their several parts in us, as filthy Thoughts seize the Mind, unchaste Sights possess the Eyes, and wicked Speeches lay hold on the Ear, so that when

one

one of those doth Offend, the other may be without Blame: But at the Stage they all become Guilty, for the Mind is polluted with Lust, the Ears with Hearing, and the Eyes with Seeing. Who without breaking the Rules of Modesty, can utter those Imitations of lewd Things, those obscene Motions and lustful Gestures that are there used, the extraordinary sinfulness of which, may be inferr'd from this, that they cannot lawfully be named — . All other Crimes pollute the Doers only, and not the Spectators and Hearers: For a Man may hear a Blasphemer, and not partake of his Sacrilege, because he dissenteth in his Mind: A Man may see a Robbery and not be guilty, because he abhors the Fact: But the Pollution of the Theatre and Stage-Plays are such, as make the Actors and Spectators equally Guilty; for whilst they willingly look on, and by that means approve them, they become Actors themselves by Sight and Assent, so that this saying of the Apostle, may be properly applied to them, *That not only those who commit such things are worthy of Death, but they also that take Pleasure in those that do them.* He further tells the antient Romans, ‘ That Stage-Plays polluted their Souls, depraved their Manners, provoked God and offended their Saviour, dishonoured their Christian Profession, and drew down Gods Judgments on their State, then miserably wasted by the Goths and Vandals; therefore he advises them eternally to abandon Theatres, which would bring their Souls, their Bodies, their Church & their State to utter Ruine.

This is so full a Proof of his being against Stage-Plays in general, and those too not polluted with Heathen Idolatries, but when Church and State were both Christian; that certainly our Doctors can never quote *Salvian* any more for their purpose.

I pass over their other Popish Saints and Schoolmen, that they quote for their Opinion, which I suppose will have as little weight with any true Protestant, as if they had quoted St. *Garnet* or St. *Coleman*, but shall take notice of an Argument (page xxi.) that the Canons of Councils brought against the Stage, relate only to Scandalous Plays or Immodest Actors; — and here also the COUNCILS shall speak for themselves.

C A P. VII.

Councils against the STAGE.

TH E Council of *Eliberis* in *Spain*, held *Anno Dom. 305.* ordered those who lent their Garments to adorn Plays, to be Ex-

- * Can. 57. communicated for three Years ^{1.} That no Stage-Player should be received into the Church, unless they renounce their Art; and if they returned to it again, they should be cast out ^{2.} That no Believer should marry a Stage-Player, on pain of
- * Can. 62. ^{3.} Excommunication ^{4.}
- * Can. 67. ^{5.}

The Council of *Arles*, held at *Narbon* in *France*, about the Year of our Lord 314. in the Time of *Constantine the Great*, ordered, That all Stage-Players should be Excommunicated, so long as

- * Can. 5. they continued to Act ^{4.}

The Council of *Arles* in that same Kingdom, held *Anno 326.* Enacted the like ^{5.}

The Council of *Laodicea* in *Phrygia Pacatiania*, held about 364. where most of the Bishops of *Asia* were present, Enacted, That no Clergy-man should be present at any Stage-Play ^{6.}

The

Councils against the Stage.

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The Council of *Hippo*⁷, held *An. 393.* and the ⁷ *Can. 13,*
Council of *Carthage in Africa*, held *An. 399.* where-^{and 35.}
of St. *Austin* was a Member, forbade the Clergy
and Laity the use of Stage-Plays; but ordered
them to be re-admitted into the Church upon Re-
pentance⁸.

The Council of *Carthage*, held *An. 401.* En-^{8 Can. 11,}
acted, That those who were newly Baptized or
Converted, should abstain from Stage-Plays, and
that those who upon any solemn Festival omitted
the Assembly of the Church, and resorted to
Stage Plays should be Excommunicated⁹.

The Council of *Africa* held *An. 408.* decreed,^{9 Can. 68,}
That Reconciliation with the Church, should not
be denied to Stage-Players and Common-Actors,
in case of Repentance, and abandoning their
Professions¹. That Stage-Plays are against the ^{Can. 12.}
Commandments of God². And that Stage-Play-^{2 Can. 28.}
ers should not be admitted as Evidences against
any Person, but in their proper Causes³.

The Council of *Carthage*, held *An. 419.* de-
clared all Stage-Players to be infamous Persons,
and uncapable of bearing Evidence⁴.

The Council of *Constantinople*, held *An. 680.*
and reputed both by Protestants and Papists to
be Oecumenical, ordered Clergymen that fre-
quented Stage-Plays, to be depriv'd, and Laymen
to be Excommunicated⁵.

The 2d Council of *Nice*, held about 787. and
commonly reputed the 7th Oecumenical Council,
forbids Stage-Plays, as being accursed by the Pro-
phet *Isaiah*⁶, Cap. 5. v. 11, 12. And forbid by the ^{6 Can. 22.}
Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. 31.

The Synod of *Tours*, held in the time of
Charlemain, *An. 813.* forbade to frequent Stage-
Plays, and ordered them to teach others to avoid
them⁷.

Councils against the Stage.

The second Synod of *Cabilon*, held in the same Year, forbade them in like manner.

The Council of *Mentz* and *Rheimns*, held under that same Emperor, did in the same manner forbid Stage-Plays to the Clergy.

The Council of *Cologn*, held An. 1549. forbids Comedies to be Acted in Nunneries, for though they consisted of Sacred and Pious Subjects, they can notwithstanding leave little good, but much hurt in the Minds of holy Virgins, who behold and admire the External Gestures, therefore they forbade the Acting of Comedies in Monasteries, or that Virgins should be Spectators of them.

The Council of *Milan* held, An. 1560. in the Chapter concerning the Stage and the Dice, admonishes Princes, to banish out of their Territories all Stage-Players, Tumblers, Jugglers and Jesters, and to punish such Publick Houses as entertain them.

Thus we find Synods, Antient and Modern, and some of them, during the very Darkness of Popery, expressly condemning the Stage, and that of the Council of *Cologn* is very remarkable, which forbids Virgins the seeing of Comedies, tho' the Subject be Sacred and Pious, because of the bad Impressions which the External Gesture might leave upon their Minds.

Nay, the very Council of *Trent* declared so far against Stage-Plays, as to forbid them to the Clergy *. Then what a shame is it that the Church of *England*, should not only be so remiss in declaring against the Stage, but that any of her Clergy should appear to defend it, as that Dr. does, who sent the Letter to M. *Motteux*, to prefix to his *Beauty in Distress*. And much more that any of them should be Authors to write Plays for the Stage, as *Jasper Main*, and others of a latter date, as the Author of the *Innocent Impostors*, &c.

* Sess. 24.
Surius Tom.
4. p. 979.

postors, &c. whom out of Respect I forbear to Name.

To these Antient and Modern Councils, I shall add, that of the Protestant Church of France, held at *Rochel*, An. 1571. Where this Canon was unanimously agreed upon, *viz.*

' All Congregations shall be admonished by
 ' their Ministers seriously to Reprehend and Sup-
 ' press all Dances, Mummeries and Enterludes;
 ' and it shall not be lawful for any Christians to
 ' act or be present at any Comedies, Tragedies,
 ' Plays, Enterludes, or any other such Sports, ei-
 ' ther in publick or private; *considering that they*
 ' *have always been opposed, condemned and sup-*
 ' *pressed in and by the Church, as bringing along*
 ' *with them the Corruption of good Manners.* This
 methinks ought to have more weight with *M.
 Motteux*, and his Church of *England* Divine; than the Letter of a Popish Doctor of *Paris*.

I shall insist no further on the Defence of the Stage, by the Prefacer to *Beauty in Distress*; those I have already touch'd being his principal Arguments. As for his Hints of other things, being condemned by those Fathers and Councils, which are now generally held to be Innocent, they are meer trifles: No Protestant ever held, that either Men or Councils were Infallible: But the Arguments here adduced, by those Fathers and Councils against the Stage, being founded upon general Scripture Rules, ought to direct us in our Faith and Practice, as to this Matter

Yet seeing our Parisian Doctor thinks it a mighty Argument for the Stage, That Bishops, Cardinals and Nuncios make no Scruple to be present at Plays *, though the same hath been forbid by so many Councils. Mr. *Motteux* or his Church of *England* Divine, may acquaint him if they please; That the Council of *Lateran*, held by the

**Beauty in
 Distress
 pag. 21.*

Councils against the Stage:

the Authority of Pope *Innocent* the third, in the year 1215. consisting of two Patriarchs, seventy Arch-Bishops, four hundred twelve Bishops, and eight hundred Abbots and Priors, did forbid Clergymen to be present at Stage-Plays, or to encourage Tumblers or Jesters. † So that if neither the Authority of Councils alone, nor that of a Pope and Council together, be sufficient to satisfy the *Paris* Doctor of the Unlawfulness of Clergymens frequenting the Stage; then I must make bold to tell him, That he has made a Sacrifice of the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, to the Chapel of the Devil, the Playhouse; * as Mr. *Motteux* bas Sacrificed the Authority of the Protestant Church of *France*, to the Pleasure and Profit he reaps from the Theatre and Drama.

What a horrid shame is it, that *Julian* the Apostate, should have had more Regard to the Honour of his Pagan Priests, than our present Patrons of the Stage, have either to the Credit of Popish or Protestant Divines; when as *Zozamen* tell us, *Eccles. Hist* seen in the Theatre on Pain of Disgrace.

I. S. c. 17.

An

* *Can. 15.
16. Surius,
Tom. 3. p.
734.*

* *Tertulli-
an de Spec-
taculis.*

A N
ANSWER
TO THE
DEFENCE
OF
Dramatick Poetry.

C A P. VIII.

*Church of England Divines against the
S T A G E.*

ICome next to consider the Arguments of that Book, call'd, *A Defence of Dramatick Poetry*: Or, *Review of Mr. Collier*; and must in the Threshold declare my Agreement with the Ingenious Author, in his P R E F A C E, That if the Sufferance of the Theatre, be so fatally destructive to Morality, Virtue and Religion as Mr. Collier has endeavoured to render it, he has more Satyriz'd the Pulpit than the Stage; and that this Universal Silence of the whole Clergy must conclude their

their neglect of their Christian Duty : But I must beg leave to inform him, that he is mistaken when he says, *Mr. Collier is the first Pulpit or Press-Sermon upon that Text* : For tho' it be true, that the Church of *England* Clergy in general, have been guilty of a Culpable Silence, as to this Head, since the Restoration of King *Charles II.* yet others have not. Nor is Mr. *Collier* the first Church of *England* Divine, who since that time hath attack'd the Stage from the Pulpit. Mr. *Wesley* in a Reformation-Sermon, preached in St. *James's Church Westminster*, Feb. 13. and afterwards at St. *Brides*, must be allowed to have had the start of him. Wherein he expresses himself [page 20, &c.] thus:

' Our *Infamous Theatres* seem to have done
 ' more Mischief than *Hobbs* himself, or our new
 ' Atheistical Clubs, to the *Faith* and *Morals* of
 ' the *Nation*. Moral Representations are own'd
 ' to be in their own Nature, not only Innocent,
 ' but ev'n useful as well as pleasant ; but what is
 ' this to those which have no Morals or Morality
 ' at all in them, and which are the most Immoral
 ' Things in the World, which the more any good
 ' Man is acquainted with them, the less he must
 ' still like them, and at which Modest Heathens
 ' would blush to be present. If we ever hope
 ' for an entire Reformation of Manners, even our
 ' Jails and our *Theatres* must have their shares.
 ' With as much Reason may we exclaim against
 ' our Modern Plays and Interludes, as did the old
 ' Zealous Fathers against the *Pagan Spectacles*,
 ' and as justly rank these, as they did the others
 ' among those Pomps and Vanities of this wicked
 ' World, which our Baptism obliges us to re-
 ' nounce and to abhor. What Communion hath
 ' the Temple of God with Idols, with those Abo-
 ' minable Mysteries of Iniquity, which out-do
 ' the

the old *Fescennina* of the Heathens, the lewd
Orgies of *Bacchus*, and the impious Feasts of
Isis and *Priapus*? I know not how any Persons
can profitably or indeed decently present them-
selves here before God's *Holy Oracle*, who are
frequently present at those Schools of Vice, and
Nurseries of Profaneness and Lewdness, to
unlearn there, what they are here taught out of
God's *Holy Word*. — Would you suffer your
Friend or your *Child* to resort every day to a
Pesthouse, or a place infected with any Conta-
gious or Deadly Disease, whence you had seen
many Persons carried out dead before you. If
none would do this, who pretended to be in his
Right Senses. What excuse can be made for
those who do worse, and are themselves fre-
quently present, as well as suffer others to be
so, at that place which is so nearly allied to
Hers, which Solomon describes, *Whose House is*
the Way to Hell, and her Gates lead down to the
Chambers of Death? — How can such Per-
sons pray every day, *Lead us not into Tempta-*
tion, when they themselves wilfully rush into
the very *Mouth of it*? 'Tis true the Stage pre-
tends to *Reform Manners*, but let them tell us
how many *Converts* they can Name by their
means to *Vertue and Religion*, during these last
thirty or forty Years, and we can give *Numerous*
and *sad Instances* to the contrary, even of a Brave
and *Virtuous Nation* too generally *deprav'd* and
corrupted, to which there cannot perhaps be any
one thing *assigned*, which has more highly con-
tributed than these unsufferable and abominable
Representations, the *Authors* of which, though
the publick should continue to take notice of
them, would either be forc'd so far to alter
them, that they would hardly be known, or
else they would fall of themselves. If Men
would

' would but withdraw their *Company* from them,
 ' as their presence there does actually encourage
 ' and support them. To close the Head whereon I
 ' am sorry there's so much cause of insisting, since
 ' there are too many of whom we may without
 ' breach of Charity, believe that they'd rather
 ' forsake the *Church* than the *Theatre*, by their
 ' being so much more *frequently* and *delightfully*
 ' present at the latter, than they are at the for-
 ' mer.

' If Oaths, if Blasphemy, if perpetual Profana-
 ' tion of the Glorious Name of God and our Blef-
 ' sed Redeemer, if making a *Scoff* and a *Laughter*
 ' at his Holy Word and Institutions, and I know
 ' not why I should not add, his *Ministers* too;
 ' which is the very *Salt* and almost *Imprimatur*,
 ' to most of the Comedies of the present Age.
 ' If Filthiness and foolish Talking, and profane
 ' or *immodest Festing*, and insulting over the *Mis-*
 ' *ries*, and excusing, and *representing*, and *recom-*
 ' *mending* the Vices of Mankind, either by not pu-
 ' nishing them at all, or *slightly* punishing them, or
 ' even making them prosperous and happy, and
 ' teaching others, first how to be wicked, and then
 ' to defend or hide their Wickedness, or at least to
 ' think *Vertue* ridiculous and unfashionable, and
 ' *Religion* and *Piety* fit for none but old People,
 ' Fools and Lunaticks.

' If *contempt* of *Superiors*, if false Notions of
 ' Honour, if height of Lewdness and Pride, and Re-
 ' venge, and even Murder, be those Lessons which
 ' are daily taught at these *publick Playhouses*, to
 ' the disgrace of our *Age*, *corruption* of our *Mo-*
 ' *rals*, and *Scandal* and *Odium* of our *Nation*; for
 ' the Truth of which, we may appeal to all the
 ' Unprejudic'd, and Virtuous part of Mankind;
 ' Then we may further ask, Whether these are
 ' fit

' fit places for the Education of *Youth*? the Diver-
' sion of those of *Riper-Age*, or indeed so much as
' tollerable, as they now are; and without a great
' and unexpected *Reformation* under any Christi-
' an Government. If they are so, they may then
' continue in their present State, and we may still
' frequent them; but in the mean time, how can
' we presume to come hither unto *Gods House*,
' and his *Holy Table*? unless we could answer that
' pathetick Expostulation of God to his own Peo-
' ple, who liv'd not answerable to their Profession.
' What hast thou to do to tread in my Courts, or
' take my Name into thy Lips; seeing thou hatest
' to be Reformed, and hast cast my Words be-
' hind thy Back, and wer't Partaker with the A-
' dulterer?

Thus Mr. *Wesley*, who our Author knows is none of the most Contemptible of our Poets himself, and is no Enemy to the Stage, but only aims at its Reformation. Yet its plain, his Charge is as heavy against the English Stage, as that of Mr. *Collier*; though he is for making use of the Pruning-Hook and not of the Ax.

Dr. Horneck against the S T A G E.

Dr. *Horneck*, whose Remembrance is still savory, because of his Eminent Piety, did several years before Mr. *Wesley*, in his Book, entituled the *Sirenes: or Delight and Judgment*. Edit. 2. Printed in 1690. bring as heavy a Charge against the Stage, as can well be drawn up: which is so much the more remarkable; That he does not cry down all Representations of History, or of Mens Actions in the World as Unlawful; but would seem to allow of such as are restrain'd altogether to Virtue and Goodness, and such Accomplishments of the Soul, which the wisest and holiest Men in all Ages, have been

been desirous and ambitious of —. And says,
 ‘ Though Vertue cannot be well either discour-
 sed of, or represented without its opposite Vice,
 ‘ yet such is the Nature of Vice, such the unhappy
 Consequences of it; that if either the Plea-
 sure, or Ease, or Prosperity and Success of it be
 shewn and acted, though but for a few Minutes,
 ‘ whatever Fate it ends in, its so agreeable to the
 corrupted Tempers of Men, that it leaves a plea-
 sing Impression behind it, nor is the After-Clap
 ‘ or doleful Exit of it, strong enough to prevent a
 ‘ liking or satisfaction, especially in the younger
 sort, who are generally more taken with its pre-
 sent Content and Titillations, than frightened with
 its dull and muddy Conclusion: For while its
 present Success and Sweetness is acting, the Cu-
 pid strikes the Heart, and lays such a Foundation
 there, as Mocks all the Death and Ruine, it af-
 ter some time doth end in.

Therefore he says a little lower, ‘ Nothing of
 the present amiableness of Vice ought to be
 mingled with the Scenes; for though Vice must
 almost necessarily be named in these *Living Landships* ; yet it should be only named, and
 never named but with Horror, and the Genero-
 fity and Grandure of Vertue acted to the Life.
 Vice should never appear but in its ugly Shape,
 for if you dress it in its shining Robes, though it
 be but for a quarter of an Hour, such is the Ve-
 nom of this Basilisk, it breaths a poisonous Va-
 por both on the Actor and Spectator.

This is the Scheme of the Reformation Dr. Horneck proposes for the Drama, which if it took effect, the Playhouses would be little esteemed by those who now frequent them most, for according to this Proposal, the Plays would be perfect Historical Lectures upon the Virtues and Vices of Mankind, without any thing of those Amorous

morous Representations and Intreagues, which now recommend them so much to our Gallants.

But to come to the Doctors Opinion of the Modern Plays, we find it thus, That they are fitted for Vanity and Luxury; for though they represent the Punishment of Vice, and the Reward of Virtue to the Life, yet it is done rather with Advantage to the former, than to raise the Credit of the latter; and the effect shews it, viz. the Corruption and Debauchery of Youth, and Persons of all sorts and sizes.

They are suited says he, 'to the loose Humour of the Age, which seems to hate all things that are serious, as much as Ratsbane, and delights in nothing so much as in Jests and Fooleries, and seeing the most venerable things turn'd into ridicule. Here no Play relishes but what is stuff'd with Love Tricks, and that which makes People laugh most, is the best written Comedy.'

'Wantonness is set out in its glittering Garb, and the melting Expressions that drop from its Lips, are so charming to a carnal Appetite, that the young Lad wishes himself almost in the same Passion and Intreague of Love, he sees acted on the Stage; it looks so pleasant and Ravishing.'

'Here Religion is too often traduc'd, and thorough the sides of Men that differ from our Church, the very Foundation of Christianity is shaken and undermin'd — — — Here few sacred things are spared, if they serve to make up the Decorum of the A&t.'

'Here the supreme Creator is too often revil'd, thro' the ill Language giv'n to the Heathen Nums, and things that favor of real Piety render'd flat, insipid and impertinent, Here all that may raise the Flesh into Action and Desire is advanced. — — — Here all those wanton Looks and Gestures, and Postures that be in the Mode

are practis'd according to Art, and you may remember you have seen People when dismissed from a Play, strive to get that Grace and Meen they saw in the Mimick on the Stage.

Here Men Swear and Curse; and actually imprecate themselves; and though they do it under the Name of the Person they act, yet their own Tongue speaks their Sin, and their Body is the Agent that commits it; and thus they damn themselves for a Man in Imagination.

And are these things fit for a Christian to behold? is this a sight agreeable to the Strait-Way, and the Narrow Gate which leads to Life? Is there any thing in the Gospel more plainly forbid, than conforming to the World, and what can that Prohibition import, if Conformity to the World in beholding those dangerous Sights, be not in a great Measure meant by it. We may put forc'd Glosses upon the Words, but doth not this look like the natural Sense of them.

Holiness, for without it no Man shall see the Lord, is the very Character of Men who name the Name of Christ, if they bear not that Name in vain; and will any Man of Sense be so bold, as to say, that Shows which have so much Sin in them, are suitable to that Holiness. We know who said, Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, and who sees not that he who delights in such Shews, neither dares Pray that Prayer, nor can have any desire to Imitate David in his Holiness, for he is pleased with Vanity, fixes his Eyes upon it, makes it the pleasing Object of his Sight, and consequently instead of turning his Eyes away from it, turns them to it.

If thy right Eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee, &c. said our Saviour. * If there be any Sense in this Passage, the meaning must necessarily be, that if the Eye or beholding an Object

* Mat. 5. 29.

'lest prove an Occasion of evil; the Eye must be
'so carefully and so totally withdrawn from the
'Object, as if it were actually pluck'd out, or were
'of no use in the Body. What an occasion of
evil the beholding of such scurrilous Shews is,
none can judge so well as he who takes notice,
how by these sights the horror which attended
some Sins is taken off, and Men are tempted to
entertain a more favourable Opinion of them, how
apt upon these Occasions they are to laugh at
those Sins, which require Rivers of Tears, and
to smile at the Jest they hear, which deserves
their most rigid Censures.

'God would not suffer the Israelites *to take the Name of the Heathen Gods in their Mouth* †, for fear their frequent naming of them should lessen ^{Exodus} 23. 13.
their Awful Apprehensions of the suprem Deity,
or be tempted through that Familiarity to think
there was no great harm in worshipping of them.
The Substance of this Precept is Moral and con-
sequently cannot be supposed to be abolished by
the Death of Christ, and since God would not
permit it to the Jews, how should he be supposed
to give leave to Christians, of whom he requires
greater strictness. — How in our modern Plays
in most Addresses, Wishes and Imprecations, the
Heathen Deities are brought in, I need not tell
you. The Actors swear by God in the singular
number, but in their Entire Harangues or Witty
Sentences, which they intend shall move most,
the Gods are call'd in, and that's the Graee of
their part. — The Truth is, such Men seek
to turn Religion again into Paganism, and the
Stile they use in their respective Speeches about
things above, is fitted for that purpose.

'Flatter not your self Sir, with a Fancy that
these Plays are no where forbid in the Bible, and
that therefore it may be lawful to see them, for

'the Word *κωμος*, Revelling, to which the Apostle
'threatens Exclusion out of the Kingdom of Hea-
'ven, Gal. 5. 21. and from which the word Co-
'medy is in all probability deriv'd; though I know
'others fetch it from *κωμα*, a Village: because in
'antient times they did sing Songs about Country
'Towns: I say this word includes all such Vain,
'Lascivious, Ludicrous and Jocular Representations,
'not only Dancing and Luxurious Feasting, but
'Wanton, Light and Amorous Interludes.*.

Vid. Gerb. The Word is very comprehensive, and being
Job. Voss. de Idol. so, one would think should fright every serious
I. 2. c. 8. Person, from coming within the Guilt of that,
'which hath so fevere a Threatning annex'd thereto.
'Let us but consider the Nature, Scope and
'Drift of our Religion; it commands us Decen-
'cy, Modesty, Sobriety, Vigilancy or Watchful-
'ness over our Thoughts, and Words and Actions,
'Simplicity in the inward and outward Man, re-
'deeming the Time, employing the Hours God
'hath lent us, in profitable Discourses, and things
'useful and tending to Edification. It bids us ab-
'stain from fleshly Lusts, which War against the
'Soul, it condemns all Rioting, Chambering, Wan-
'tonness, and making Provision for the Flesh, to
'fulfil the Lusts thereof. It commands us to walk
'after the Spirit, to be Heavenly Minded, to have
'the same Mind and Temper in us, which was al-
'so in Christ Jesus, to grow in Grace, to advance
'in Goodness, to grow Strong in the Lord, and in
'the power of his Might. It bids us to stand up
'for the Glory of our God, and to be concerned
'when his Name or Religion, or things Sacred are
'abused. It bids us avoid Scandal, and take heed
'we do not by our Example, either draw people
'into Errors, or confirm them in their Sins. It
'bids us take heed of discouraging our Neighbours
from Goodness, and of laying a Stumbling-block
in

' in the way of weaker Christians. It bids us ex-
' hort one another daily, and beware lest any of us
' be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin.
' These are some of the principal Rules, — but
' how they can be observed, by Persons that delight
' in those Shews, I cannot apprehend.

' Is it Modesty to hear that Ribaldry and filthy
' Communication, which some Plays are stuffed
' with, or to be a Spectator of so many undecent
' and wanton Gestures, Postures and Actions,
' which in some Comedies make up the greatest
' part of the Shew? Is this Sobriety to stand by
' and hear Men Curse and Swear, and talk of
' things which should not be so much as named,
' among Christians? Is this Decency to afford your
' presence in a Place, where the most debauched
' Persons assemble themselves, for ill Ends and
' Purposes? Is this your Fear of God, to go and
' hear the most solemn Ordinances of God *railed*
' and undervalu'd; such as Marriage and Living up
' to the strict Rules of Reafon and Conscience? Is
' this your Watchfulness over your Thoughts, and
' Words and Actions, to go and expose your selves
' to Temptation, to run into the Devils Arms, and
' give him an Opportunity to incline your Heart, to
' sinful Delights, and being pleased with things
' that God abhors? Is this that Godly Simplicity?
' the Gospel presses, to pay, for your being affect-
' ed with the vain Shews of this sinful World, and
' to take Liberty, to hear and see what Men of lit-
' tle or no Religion, shall think fit to represent unto
' you? Is this redeeming of your time, to throw
' away so many Hours upon Fooling, and seeing
' Mens ridiculous Postures, Gestures and Behaviours?
' Is this the way to grow in Grace, and to advance
' in Goodnes, and to abound more and more in
' the Love of God, which your Christianity obliges
' you to? Is not this to clog your Soul & throw Impe-
' diments in her way to Felicity? Is not this the way

' to make her enamour'd with the World ; from
 ' which a Christian is to run away, as much as he
 ' can ? By your Saviours Rule, tho' you are in the
 ' World, yet you are not to be of the World.

' These Shews alienate other Mens Affections
 ' from the best of Objects, and what security have
 ' you, that they will not alienate yours. —
 ' As you are a Christian, you are to bring your
 ' Flesh into Subjection, and to keep under your
 ' Body ; and do not these Shews signally help to-
 ' wards is Power, and Dominion over the no-
 ' bler part. — Who sees not that those
 ' Sights are meer Incentives to Lust, and Fewel
 ' to feed the Impurer Fire in our Breasts ? And is
 ' this to walk after the Spirit ? If they that walk
 ' after the Flesh cannot please God, how can you
 ' hope to please him, while you allow yourself in
 ' this Work of the Flesh ? Is the Stage likely to
 ' produce vigorous Apprehensions of Gods Grace
 ' and Favour ; you know it damps and obscures
 ' them ? Is this to have the same Mind in you,
 ' which was also in Christ Jesus : Can you ima-
 ' gine that in frequenting the Stage, you imitate
 ' his Example, did he ever incourage such empty
 ' things ? Is there any thing in all the History of
 ' his Life, that may be said to countenance such
 ' doings, could he applaud those follies, do you
 ' think, whose Life was a perfect Pattern of Ho-
 ' linefs, nay are not all his Precepts levell'd against
 ' these Scurrilities. He who preach'd up the Doc-
 ' trine of the Croſs, could he have any liking to
 ' to that which is directly contrary to that Doc-
 ' trine ? Would any Man that looks upon the Jol-
 ' ly assembly in a Play-house, think that these are
 ' Disciples of the Crucified God ? do they not
 ' look liker Mahomet's Votaries, or Epicurus his
 ' Followers. Would not one think that they are
 ' rather Disciples of ſome Heathen Jupiter, or

Venus

' Venus or Flora, or some such wanton Minion ;
 ' than of the Grave, the Austere, and the Serious
 ' Jesus, for such he would have his Followers to
 ' be ; these he would have known by Actions and
 ' a Behaviour like his own ; and is a Play likely to
 ' plant this noble Temper in you.

' As a Christian you are to shun the very Ap-
 ' pearances of Evil, and is this your Obedience,
 ' to delight in that which is Evil, to applaud it
 ' with your Smiles, to commend it with your
 ' Tongue, and to encourage it by your Presence.

' As a Christian you are the salt of the Earth *
 ' and consequently are to preserve your Neigh-
 ' bour from Corruption, and is this the way to
 ' preserve him from Infection, by your Presence in
 ' such Places, and being as vain as he, to incou-
 ' rage not only the Actors in their unlawful Pro-
 ' fession, but the Spectators too in their Disobedi-
 ' ence to the Gospel. Wo to that Man by whom
 ' the Offence cometh, it had been better for him
 ' that a Mill-stone were hanged about his Neck,
 ' and he drowned in the midst of the Sea, † faith
 ' our great Master,

' What is your going to a Play-house, but gi-
 ' ving Offence ? What is it but hardning other Men
 ' in their Sins ? Is not this tempting young People,
 ' to those Extravagancies they should detest ? Is
 ' not this justifying the Players Profession, and to
 ' make them think, that you approve of their Lu-
 ' dicrous Vocations.

' Did Christ come down from Heaven and Die,
 ' and Spill his Blood for you, that you might se-
 ' curely Indulge your carnal Genius ? Did he sa-
 ' crifice himself for you, that you might please
 ' your self with such Fooleries. — To delight
 ' in such Vanities is a Disparagement to his Love,
 ' a Blemish to his Charity, a Disgrace to his Con-
 ' descension, and an Undervaluing of so great a
 ' Mercy.

* Mat. 5.
13.

† Matthew
18.6.

Have you not observ'd it, have you not taken notice, how Men and Women, who have had some Zeal for Religion, and very Pious Inclinations; how that Zeal hath decreased upon their frequenting those Houses, how their Goodness hath decayed, how flat they are grown in Devotion, how weak in their Holy Performances. —— May be they have kept up some outward Shews, some external Formality, some earnestness for the Fringes of Religion, or for the ceremonial Part of Christianity: But have you not seen, how they are become Strangers to that Life which must adorn it.

With what face dare you approach the Table of your Lord, who have been a Spectator of such Shews but a little before? If you come to the Lords Table one day, and run to a Playhouse another, do not you destroy all you built the day before?

In this Sacrament you profess to imitate your Lord in despising the World, and is this Imitation to go one day into the House of the Lord, and the next into a Den of Thieves? for so the Stage may justly be called, where Men are robb'd of their Relish of Spiritual Objects.

Whence hath come that Atheism, that Loofness, that Indifferency in things Divine, that low Esteem of the Tremendous Mysteries of Christianity, which of late like a Land-Flood, hath overcome us? Have they not deriv'd their boldness from these places, have not the Vices represented there in jest, been practis'd by the forward Youth at home in good earnest? And can a Christian have a good Opinion of those Houses, where so many have lost their Vertue? Can any Man of reason think that after all this

Mischief

‘ Mischief, they may be safely hugg’d and ap-
‘ plauded. Those many Notorious Fornications
‘ and Adulteries, we have heard and know of,
‘ those barefac’d Cheats, Mens boasting of their
‘ Sins, and glorying in their Shame, their Impu-
‘ dence, their Courage to do Evil, their daring to
‘ do things which sober Heathens have detested ;
‘ whence have they come in a great Measure, but
‘ from those poisoned Fountains ?

‘ If Wanton, Lustful and Obscene Jests, are
‘ expressly forbid by the great Apostle, *Eph. 5. 4.*
‘ Nay, are not so much as to be nam’d among
‘ Christians, how can a Man that makes Profes-
‘ sion of that Religion hear them, or be taken
‘ with them when God’s Name is profan’d in
‘ such Houses, when Religion is mock’d, when
‘ Virtue is rendred Odious.

‘ Do but take a View of the Writings of the Primitive Fathers, and you’ll find them Unanimous in this Assertion, that in our Baptism when we renounce the Devil and his Works, and the Pomp and Glory of the World, we do particularly renounce Stage-Plays, and such Ludicrous Representations. They that liv’d nearest to the Apostolical Times, in all probability knew what was meant by this Renunciation ; and this they profess to be the sense of it ; this they assure us is meant by those Poms and Glories : And why should we presume to put a new sense upon that Vow ? They receiv’d this Interpretation from the Apostles, and propagated it to Posterity ; and in this Sense we make the Abjurations.

Of the same Opinion is Dr. *Bray*, in his Discourse on the *Baptismal Covenant*, [Printed in

1697.

1697. and Dedicated to his Highness the D. of Gloucester;] where he Comments thus on the * page 11. Pomp abjur'd in Baptism *.

' Thereby were antiently meant those Pompous
 ' Spectacles, Plays and Scenical Representations
 ' exhibited in the *Roman* Theatres; which because
 ' they were so Lewd, Cruel and Impious, the
 ' Primitive Churches strictly enjoyn'd all Christi-
 ' ans at their Baptism, not to frequent, or so much
 ' as to be once present, or ever-seen at them. —
 ' And answerable to those, are our Modern Plays
 ' acted in the Play-houses, which are no thing in-
 ' ferior to the Antient Ones, in Impiety and Lewd-
 ' ness, and having such a Malignant Influence
 ' upon Faith and Manners, as is own'd by almost
 ' all Persons, and is generally complained that
 ' they have, they ought never to be frequented
 ' by Christians, and it may very well be look'd
 ' upon as a breach of your Baptisimal Vow and
 ' Covenant, for any of you to be hereafter pre-
 ' sent at them.

Nor is it unworthy our Observation that those commendable Religious Societies of Youngmen and others of the Communion of the Church so much countenanced by the late Queen *Mary* of Blessed Memory, and the best of the Bishops, have laid it down as part of their Ninth Order that all of their Societies should wholly avoid Lewd
 † *Rise and Play-houses* *.

Progress of
 Religious
 Societies.

p. 129.

Sir

Sir Richard Blackmore against the S T A G E.

Another late Author I shall produce against them is Sir *Richard Blackmore*, in his Preface to his Excellent Poem, call'd *Prince Arthur*; whose Testimony is so much the less to be excepted against, because he seems to be for a Reformation, and not for the Abolition of the Stage: His Words are as followeth,

' Our Poets (saith he) seem ingag'd in a general Confederacy to Ruine the end of their own Art, to expose Religion and Vertue, and bring Vice and Corruption of Manners into Esteem and Reputation. The Poets that write for the Stage (at least a great part of them) seem deeply concerned in this Conspiracy. These are the Champions that Charge Religion with such desperate Resolution, and have given it so many deep and ghastly Wounds. The Stage was an Out-work or Fort rais'd for the Protection and Security of the Temple, but the Poets that kept it, have revolted and basely betray'd it; and what is worse, have turn'd all their Force and discharg'd all their Artillery against the Place their Duty was to defend. If any Man thinks this an unjust Charge, I desire him to read any of our Modern Comedies, and I believe he will soon be convinced of the Truth of what I have said.

' The Man of Sense, and the fine Gentleman in the Comedy, who as the chiefest Person propos'd to the Esteem and Imitation of the Audience, is enrich'd with all the Sense and Wit the Poet can bestow. This extraordinary Person you will

' will find to be a Derider of Religion, a great
 ' Admirer of *Lucretius*, not so much for his Lear-
 ' ning as Irreligion ; a Person wholly Idle, dis-
 ' solv'd in Luxury, abandon'd to his Pleasure, a
 ' great Debaucher of Women, profuse and extra-
 ' vagant in his Expences. And in short, this fur-
 ' nished Gentleman will appear a finished Liber-
 ' tine. The young Lady that must support the
 ' Character of a Vertuous well-manner'd sensible
 ' Woman, the most perfect Creature that can be,
 ' and the very Flower of her Sex, this Accom-
 ' plish'd Person entertains the Audience with
 ' confident Discourses immodest Repartees, and
 ' prophanie Railery. She is throughly instructed
 ' in Intreagues and Assignations, a great Scoffer
 ' at the prudent Reservednes and Modesty of the
 ' best of her Sex, she despises the wise Instructi-
 ' ons of her Parents or Guardians, is disobedient
 ' to their Authority, and at last without their
 ' Knowledge or Consent, marries her self to the
 ' Gentleman above mentioned : And can any one
 ' imagine, but that our young Ladies and Gentle-
 ' women, are admirably instructed by such Pat-
 ' terns of Sense and Virtue.

' If a Clergyman be introduc'd, as he often is,
 ' tis seldom for any other Purpose, but to abuse
 ' him, to expose his very Character and Profession;
 ' He must needs be a Pimp, a Blockhead, a Hypo-
 ' crite, some wretched Figure he must make, and
 ' almost ever, be so manag'd as to bring his Order
 ' into Contempt. This indeed is a very common,
 ' but yet so gross an Abuse of Wit, as was never
 ' endured on a Pagan Theatre, at least in the an-
 ' tient Primitive Times of Poetry, before its Puri-
 ' ty and Simplicity became corrupted, with the In-
 ' ventions of after Ages. Poets then taught Men
 ' to Reverence their Gods, and those who ferv'd
 ' them, none had so little regard for his Religion
 ' as

' as to expose it publickly, or if any had, their
' Governments were too Wise to suffer the
' Worship of their Gods, to be treated on the
' Stage with Contempt.

' In our Comedies, the Wives of our Citizens
' are highly encouraged, to despise their Husbands,
' and to make great Friendship with some such
' Virtuous Gentleman, and Man of Sense, above
' described : This is their way of Recommending
' Chastity and Fidelity ; and that Diligence and
' Frugality may be sufficiently expos'd, though
' the two Virtues, that chiefly support the being
' of any State, to deter Men from being Industri-
' ous, and Wealthy , the diligent and thriving
' Citizen is made the most wretched, contempti-
' ble thing in the World : And as the Alderman
' that makes the best Figure in the City, makes
' the worst on the Stage ; So under the
' Character of a Justice of Peace, you have all
' the Prudence and Virtues of the Country,
' most unmercifully insulted over.

' And as these Characters are set up on purpose
' to ruin all Opinion and Esteem of Virtue ; so
' the Conduct throughout, the Language, the Fable
' and Contrivance seem evidently design'd for the
' same noble end. There are few fine Conceits
' few strains of wit, or extraordinary pieces of
' Railery ; but are either Immodest or Irreligious
' and very few Scenes but have some spiteful and
' envious Stroke at Sobriety and good Manners.
' Whence the Youth of the Nation, have appa-
' rently received very bad Impressions. The uni-
' versal Corruption of Manners and Irreligious
' Disposition of Mind that Infects the Kingdom,
' seems to have been in a great Measure, deriv'd
' from the Stage, or has at least been highly pro-
' moted

' moted by it ; and 'tis great pitty that those in
 ' whose power it is, have not restrained the Li-
 ' centiousness of it, and obliged the Writers to ob-
 ' serve more *decorum*. It were to be wished that
 ' Poets, as Preachers are in some Countries, were
 ' Paid and Licensed by the State, and that none
 ' were suffered to write in prejudice of Religion
 ' and the Government ; but that all such Offen-
 ' ders, as publick Enemies of Mankind should
 ' be silenc'd and duly punished. Sure some ef-
 ' fectual Care should be taken that these Men
 ' might not be suffered by debauching our Youth,
 ' to help on the Destruction of a brave Nation.

But seeing the Author of the *DEFENCE*, says without any limitation, that Mr. *Collier* is the first who appear'd from the Pulpit or Press upon this Subject. I must put him in mind of others that have Writ and Preached against the Stage long before those I have already mentioned : And I think Mr. *Prin*, Author of the *Histriomastix*, deserves the Honour of being nam'd with the first. His Treatise being perhaps the Largest, Learnedst and most Elaborate of any that ever was writ upon the Subject, and to which Mr. *Collier* has been very much oblig'd for many things in his ingenious Book, as I own here once for all, I am highly oblig'd my self for not a few, though I have made use of them in a different Method.

I have already agreed with the Author of the *Defence*, That the general Silence of the Clergy of late against the Stage, is a Neglect of their Christian Duty ; but shall now make it appear, that it has not always been thus with the Clergy, which will be a further Confutation of our Authors Proposition, That Mr. *Collier* is the first that

that broke Silence in this Matter, and serve as a Reprof to the generality of the Church of England Divines of the prefent times, that they come fo much short of thofe of the former, in their Zeal againft the Stage.

*Antient Church of England Divines against the
S T A G E.*

IT may perhaps be reckon'd needless to go fo far back as the famous *Bradwardin*, Arch-bifhop of *Canterbury*, who wrote againft the * Stage in 1345. or *Wickliff* the Morning Star of our Reformation, who wrote againft † Plays in 1380. and therefore we fhall descend to thofe times, when the Reformation was arriv'd to a good hight: And thus we find in 1572. Dr. *Matthew Parker*, Arch-bifhop of *Canterbury*, in his Book *De Antiquitate Ecclesiæ Britannicæ*, [Page 445.] afferts,

' That Stage-Plays are not to be fuffer'd in any Christian or well govern'd Commonwealth.

Dr. *George Alley* Bishop of *Exeter*, and Divinity Lecturer at St. *Paul's* in 1571. the fecond year of Queen *Elizabeth*, declaims againft, ' Play-Books and Stage-Plays, as the Fomenters and *Fewel of Lust*, the occafion of Adultery and other intollerable Evils. † And in that fame Book, * which its fit to obferve by the way, was Printed by her Majesties Authority, he Inveighs againft wanton and impure Books, as being then too frequent, and wishes the Authors of them the fame Punishment, that the Emperor *Severus* inflicted upon *Vetronius Turinus* his Familiar, viz. That they might perish by Smoak, who liv'd by it.

A little further he fays, ' That many of these who profefs Christianity, are in respect of reading

* *De causa*
Dei l. i. c. i.
† *Coroll. 20.*

‡ *Dialog.*

l. 3. cap. i.

† Poor
mans Li-
brary part
l. fol. 13,

39.

* *Part 1.*
Misccl. 6.
prelect. 2.
fol. 46, &c.

‘ing Lascivious Books, worse by far than the Heathens : The People called *Masilienses*, before they knew Christ, were of such pure and uncorrupt Morals, that their Manners were account the best; and amongst other good Laws in their City this was one ; That there should be no Comedy acted there, because their Arguments were for the most part of wanton and dissolute Love ; But alas, all Places in our days are fill’d with Juglers, Scoffers, Jesters, Players, who may say and do what they list, be it never so fleshly and filthy, and yet are applauded with laughing and clapping of Hands. *Epicharmis* was punished by *Hiero of Syracuse*, for rehearsing some wanton Verses in the presence of his Wife: *Sophocles* rebuk’d *Pericles* for launching out in the Commendation of the Beauty of a Boy that pass’d by him ; and was told, that not only the Hand of a Pretor ought to be free from Bribes, but their Eyes clear from wanton Looks ; that the Athenians would suffer none of their Judges to write any Comedy or Play : But I speak it with Sorrow, our vicious Balladmakers, and Composers of lewd Songs and Plays, go not only unpunished but are largely Rewarded.

‘There was no Adulterer in *Sparta*, because the Citizens were not suffered to be present at any Comedy or other Play, lest they should hear and see those things that were contrary to their Laws.

The next we shall mention, is Bishop *Babington*, who in his Exposition on the seventh Commandment says, ‘ Those Prophane, Wanton Stage Plays and Enterludes, what an occasion they are of Adultery and Uncleanness, by Gesture, Speech, Conveyance, and Devices to attain ungodly Desires, the World knoweth by long Experience,

perience, Vanities they are if we make the best of them' and the Prophet prayeth to have his Eyes turn'd away from beholding Vanity, evil Communication corrupts good Manners, and they abound with it. They are always full of dangerous Sights, and we must abstain from all appearance of Evil: They corrupt the Eyes with alluring Gestures, the Eyes corrupt the Heart, and the Heart corrupts the Body till all be horrible before the Lord: All things are polluted by Histrio[n]ical Gestures, saith Chrysostome: And Plays says he, are the Feasts of Satan, the Inventions of the Devil. Councils have decreed very sharply against them, those who have been defil'd by them, have on their Death Beds confessed the danger of them, and warned others for ever to avoid them. — The Bishop adds, that Play Haunters, carry away with them the Ideas and Similitudes of the lewd Representations they behold in Stage-Plays, which sink deep into their Minds; That they suck in the Poison of Stage-Plays with great Delight, and practise the Speeches and Conveyances of Love, which there they see and learn, and having once polluted their Speech with the Language of the Theatre (for I will never call it polishing) they are never well but when they have Company, to whom they may impart the Stories and Salutations, they have learned at the Stage.

Bishop Andrews in his Exposition of the seventh Commandment. Bishop Baily in his Preface to the *Practise of Piety*, and Bishop Hall in his Epistles, agree with the former in condemning Stage-Plays: Of the same Mind is Doctor Reynolds in his overthrow of Stage-Plays, Doctor Griffith, Doctor Williams, Doctor Elton and Mr. Dod on the seventh Commandment. Doctor Sparks in his *Rehearsal Sermon*, at Paul's Cross,

April 29. 1579. Doctor Whites Sermon there,
March 24. 1615. Dr. Bond of the Sabbath in
 1595. and as many more Doctors, as would
 serve to make up a Convocation; whence it is
 evident, that the Divines of the Church in those
 Days, were far from being silent against the Stage.
 Nay we are told, in the Preface to the second
 and third *Blast of Retreat, from Plays and Theatres,*
 Printed in 1580. ‘That many Godly Ministers
 did from Day to Day, in all Places of greatest
 Resort, denounce the Vengeance of God against
 all such be they high or low, that favoured
 Players, Theatres, or Plays.

Mr. Northbrook a learned Divine, in his Treatise against Vain Plays and Enterludes: Printed by Authority in 1579. says, ‘That to speak his Mind and Conscience plainly, and in the fear of God; Players and Plays are not tollerable, nor to be suffered in any Commonwealth; because they are the Occasion of much Sin and Wickedness, corrupting both the Minds and the Manners of the Spectators.

There’s one Book more, writ in those times against the Stage, that I cannot omit, because of the singularity of its Title, viz. *The Church of evil Men and Women, whereof Lucifer is the Head, and Players and Play-baunters, the Members.* And in 1625. a Treatise against Stage-Plays was dedicated to the Parliament, from all which it will appear, that the Author of the *Defence of Dramatick Poetry*, spoke without Book; when he said, Mr. Collier, was the first that appeared from the Press or the Pulpit, against our Stage, and that the present Divines of the Church, who have betrayed the Cause by their Silence, or encouraged the Stage by their Pens and Practice, come not only short of their Ancestors, but are directly opposite to them.

Nor was it the Divines alone, who in those days attack'd the Theatre: But Poets of their own, who being touch'd with remorse for writing to the Stage, turn'd their Pens against it, and made such Discoveries of its Lewdness, as no other Persons were able to do.

C A P. IX.

*The Stage Condemned and Anatomized by
Play-Poets.*

THE First we shall name is Mr. *Stephen Goffon*, formerly a Stage-Poet, for which he says himself, in the Epistle to his *School of Abuse*: Printed by Authority, and dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, in 1578. ‘ That his ‘ Eyes had shed many Tears of Sorrow, and his ‘ Heart had sweat many drops of Blood, when he ‘ remembred Stage-Plays, to which he was once ‘ so much addicted.

This Penitent Stage-Poet in the Book just now mentioned, and in another called, *His Plays Confuted* : Printed in 1581. and Dedicated to Sir Francis Walsingham, writes to this Effect; ‘ I will ‘ shew you says he what I saw, and inform you ‘ what I read of Plays. *Ovid* said, That *Romulus* ‘ built his Theatre as a Horse-Fair for Whores, ‘ made Triumphs, and set up Plays to gather fair ‘ Women together, that every one of his Souldiers ‘ might take where he lik'd, a snatch for his ‘ Share. It would seem that the Abuse of such ‘ Places was so great, that for any chaste Liver to ‘ haunt them was a black Swan, and a white Crow.

‘ Dion so straitly forbideth the antient Families of
 ‘ Rome, and Gentlewomen that tender their Name
 ‘ and Honour to come to Theatres, and rebukes
 ‘ them so sharply when he takes them Napping,
 ‘ that if they be but once seen there, he judgeth
 ‘ it sufficient cause to speak ill of them, and to
 ‘ think worse. The Shadow of a Knave hurts an
 ‘ honest Man, the Scent of a Stews an honest Ma-
 ‘ tron, and the Shew of Theatres a meer Specta-
 ‘ tor. Cooks don’t shew more Art in their Jun-
 ‘ kets to vanquish the Taste, nor Painters in Shad-
 ‘ dow to allure the Eye, than Poets in Theatres to
 ‘ wound the Conscience? there set they abroach
 ‘ strange Consorts of Melody to tickle the Ear;
 ‘ costly Apparel to flatter the Sight, effeminate
 ‘ Gestures to ravish the Sense, and wanton Speech
 ‘ to whet inordinate Lust; these by the privy En-
 ‘ tries of the Ear slip down into the Heart, and
 ‘ with Gunshot of Affection gall the Mind. Do-
 ‘ mitian suffered Playing and Dancing so long in
 ‘ Theatres, that Paris debauched his *Domitia*, and
 ‘ Menster did the like by *Messalina*. Ovid in his
 ‘ *Arte Amandi*, chargeth his Pilgrims to keep close
 ‘ to the Saints whom they serve, and to shew their
 ‘ double Diligence, to lift the Gentlewomens Robes
 ‘ from the Ground, to prevent their soylng in the
 ‘ Dust, to sweep Moats from their Kirtles, to keep
 ‘ their Fingers in Ure, to lay their Hands at their
 ‘ Backs for an easie stay, to praise that which they
 ‘ commend, to present them Pomegranates to pick
 ‘ as they fit, and when all is over to wait on them
 ‘ mannerly to their Houles.

In our Playhouses at *London*, you shall see such
 ‘ heaving and shoving, such itching and sholdring
 ‘ to fit by Women, such care for their Garments,
 ‘ that they be not trod on, such eying their Laps
 ‘ that no Chipslight in them, such Pillows to their
 ‘ Backs that they take no hurt, such whispering
 ‘ in

' in their Ears, I don't know what, such giving
 ' them Pippins to pass the time, such playing at
 ' Foot-Saunt without Cards, such ticking, such
 ' toying, such smiling, such winking, and such
 ' manning them Home when the Sports are ended,
 ' that it is a perfect Comedy to mark their Beha-
 ' viour, and is as good as a Course at the Game it
 ' self to dogg them a little, or to follow aloof by
 ' the print of their Feet, and so discover by sfor
 ' where the Deer taketh foil. If this were as
 ' well noted as it is ill seen, or as openly punished
 ' as secretly practised, I have no doubt but the
 ' Cause would be feared to drie up the Effect, and
 ' those pretty Rabbets ferreted from their Bur-
 ' rows.

' For they that lack Customers all the Week
 ' either because their haunt is unknown, or the
 ' Constables and Officers watch them so narrowly,
 ' that they dare not queatch, to celebrate the Sab-
 ' bath, flock to Theatres and there keep a general
 ' Market of Baudry. Not that any filthiness in-
 ' deed is committed within the compass of that
 ' Ground, as was done in *Rome*; but that every
 ' Wanton and his Paramour, every Man & his Mi-
 ' striss, every *Jack* and his *Joan*, every Knav and
 ' his Quean, are there first acquainted, and chea-
 ' pen the Merchandise in that place, which they
 ' pay for elsewhere, as they can agree. I design
 ' not to shew you all that I saw, nor half that I
 ' have heard of those Abuses, lest you should
 ' judge me more willing to teach than to forbid
 ' them.

The next is the Author of, *The Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres*, who had formerly been a Stage-Poet, but tells us he renounc'd that wicked Profession, *as being Incompatible with the Christian Religion, or his own Salvation*. He gives his Opinion of Plays thus*, 'That they are * p43,44 not

'not to be suffered in a Christian-Common-
 'wealth, because they are Enemies to Nature and
 'Religion, Allurements unto sin, Corrupters of
 'good Manners, the Cause of Security and Care-
 'lesness in Religion, and meer Brothel-houses of
 'Bawdry : They bring a Scandal upon the Gos-
 'pel, the Sabbath into Contempt, Mens Souls
 'into danger, and the whole Commonwealth
 'into Disorder. —— These are bitter and
 'hainous Expressions you will say, no doubt ; yet
 'they are nothing so bitter as the Cause requireth.
 'It were ill to paint the Devil like an Angel, he
 'must be drawn as he is, that he may be the bet-
 'ter known —— Therefore that others
 'should not be deceived with that wherewith I
 'have been deceived my self, I thought it my
 'Duty to expose the Abuse of the Plays and
 'Actors both, that every Man might refrain from
 'their Wickedness, and that the Magistrate being
 'informed of it, might take effectual Methods
 'utterly to suppress them ; for if they still be
 'permitted to make Sale of Sin, we shall pull
 'the Vengeance of God upon our Heads, and
 'bring the Nation to Confusion. —— What
 'I speak of Plays from my own Knowledge,
 'may be affirmed by Hundreds more, who know
 'those Matters as well as my self. —— Some
 'Citizens Wives, upon whom God hath laid his
 'Hand for an Example to others, have confessed
 'on their Death-bed with Tears, that at those
 'Spectacles they have receiv'd such Infection, as
 'of honest Women made them light Hufwives :
 'By them they have dishonoured the Vessels of
 'Holiness, brought their Husbands into Contempt,
 'their Children in Question, their Bodies into
 'Sickness, and their Souls into Danger.

It must be own'd, that this is an heavy Charge upon the Stage, nor can the Truth of it be questioned, seeing it comes from the Hand of a penitent Stage-Poet, who delivers it as his own certain Knowledge, but if his Testimony and that of Mr. *Goffon* before exhibited be not enough; The Patrons of the Stage may be pleased to consider, that their Evidence is confirmed by Bishop *Babington* on the VII. Commandment and Dr. *Layton*, in his *Speculum Belli Sacri*.

But to return to our Author, he goes on thus,

' The repair of such as are honest to those
' Places of Evil Resort, makes their own Good
' Life to be called in Question; for that Place
' breeds Suspicion as well of the Good as the
' Bad; for who can see a Man or a Woman Re-
' sort to an House that is notoriously Wicked, but
' will judge them to be of the Crew of the Un-
' godly. The honestest Woman is the soonest
' assaulted, and hath such Snares laid to entrap
' her, as if God assist her not, she must needs be
' taken. When I gave my self first to observe the
' Abuse of Common-plays, I found my Heart sore
' smitten with Sorrow; Sin did there so much
' abound, and was so openly committed, that I
' looked when God in his Justice and Wrath
' would have presently confounded the Beholders.
' The Theatre I found to be an appointed Place of
' Baudry: mine own Ears have heard honest Wo-
' men allur'd with abominable Speeches. Some-
' times I have seen two Knaves at once impor-
' tuning one Light Huswife, whence a Quarrel
' hath ensued to the Disquieting of many. There
' are Intrigues carried on to debauch Married
' Women from their Husbands, and Places ap-
' pointed for Meeting and Conference.

' When I took notice of those Abuses, and saw
 ' that the Theatre was become Satan's Council-
 ' House, I resolved never to employ my Pen to so
 ' vile a Purpose, nor to be an Instrument of gather-
 ' ing the Wicked together. — It may per-
 ' haps be said, I am too lavish of my Discourse,
 ' and that what I have now said might have been
 ' forborn; but he that dissembles Ungodliness is a
 ' Traitor to God, and as guilty of the Offence
 ' as the Offenders themselves. Since therefore
 ' the Cause is Gods, I dare put my self forth to
 ' be an Advocate against Satan to the rooting out
 ' of Sin. Are not our Eyes at Plays carried away
 ' with Pride and Vanity, our Ears abus'd with
 ' Amorous and Filthy Discourse, our Tongues
 ' employed in Blaspheming God or commanding
 ' that which is Wicked? Are not our Hearts
 ' through the Pleasure of the Flesh, the Delight of
 ' the Eye, and the fond Motions of the Mind,
 ' withdrawn from the Service of God, and the
 ' Meditation of his Goodness. — There's no
 ' Zealous Heart but must needs bleed to see how
 ' many Christian Souls are there swallow'd up in
 ' the Whirlpool of Devilish Impudence. Who-
 ' soever shall visit the Chappel of Satan [I mean
 ' the Theatre] shall find there no want of young
 ' Ruffians, nor lack of Harlots, utterly void of
 ' Shame; who by their Wanton Gestures and
 ' Shameless Behaviour discover what they are.
 ' — Let Magistrates assure themselves
 ' that without speedy Redress all things will grow
 ' so much out of order that they will be past
 ' remedy. Our young Men are thereby made
 ' Shameless, Stubborn and Impudent. Tell them
 ' of Scripture, they will turn it into Ridicule:
 ' Rebuke them for breaking the Sabbath, they
 ' will call you a Precifian. —

' He that is virtuously dispos'd, shall find lewd Persons enough in the Play-house to withdraw him from Virtue by Promises of Pleasure and Pastime. The Play-house is the School of Satan, the Chapple of ill Council, where he shall see so much of Iniquity and Loofness ; so great Outrage and Scope of Sin, that it is a wonder if he return not either wounded in Conscience or changed in Life. I would wish therefore all Masters to withdraw themselves and their Servants from such Assemblies. Youth needs not seek after Schoolmasters, they can learn Evil too fast of themselves. Many young Men of honest Natures and tractable Dispositions, have been chang'd by those Shews and Spectacles, and become Monsters.

' It is wonderful to consider, of what force the Gestures of a Player (which *Tully* calls the Eloquence of the Body) are to move and prepare a Man for that which is evil. — Nothing entreth more effectually into the Memory than that which cometh by seeing ; things heard do lightly pass away, but the Ideas of what we have seen, says *Petrarch*, stick fast in us whether we will or not.

' Those Enchantments have vanquish'd the Chastity of many Women, some by taking pity of the deceitful Tears of the Lover on the Stage, have been mov'd by their Complaint, to compassionate their secret Friends, whom they thought to have felt the like Torment. Some having observ'd the Examples, how young Women being restrain'd from the Marriage of those their Friends have mislik'd, have there learn'd the Art to Steal them away ; others observing by the Example of the Stage, how another Mans Wife hath been assaulted and overcome, have not failed to practise those tricks in earnest, that were

‘ were shewn before them in Jest: Yet the cunning
 ‘ Craft of the Stage, is surpassed by that of the
 ‘ Scaffolds without, for they which are evil dis-
 ‘ posed, no sooner hear any thing spoken that
 ‘ may serve their turns, but they apply it: Alas!
 ‘ say they to the Gentlewomen by them, Is it not
 ‘ pity this passionate Lover should be so martyr’d?
 ‘ and if they find them inclin’d to foolish pity, then
 ‘ they apply the matter to themselves, and pray
 ‘ that they would extend the same Compassion to-
 ‘ wards them, as they seemed to shew to the af-
 ‘ flicted Lover on the Stage. Those running head-
 ‘ ed Lovers, are grown such perfect Scholars, by
 ‘ long continuance at this School, that there is
 ‘ not almost one word spoken, but they can make
 ‘ use of it to serve their own turn.

‘ Believe me, there can be no stronger Engine
 ‘ found, to batter the Honesty of married and un-
 ‘ married Women; than the hearing of common
 ‘ Plays. There wanton Fables, and pastoral Songs
 ‘ of Love, which they use in their comical Dis-
 ‘ courses, and are all taken out of the Secret
 ‘ Armory of *Venus*, overturn Chastity, and corrupt
 ‘ the Manners of Youth, insomuch, that it is a
 ‘ Miracle if there be found any Woman or Maid,
 ‘ which with those Spectacles of strange Lust, is
 ‘ not frequently inflam’d to down right Fury.

‘ Don’t we use in those Discourses to Counter-
 ‘ feit Witchcraft, Charming Draughts and Amo-
 ‘ rous Potions, to stir up Men to Lust, by which
 ‘ Examples the ignorant multitude are provoked to
 ‘ seek after the unlawful Love of others. The
 ‘ Device of carrying Letters by Laundresses, and
 ‘ practising with Pedlars to carry their Tokens
 ‘ under colour of selling their Merchandise, and
 ‘ other kinds of Intreagues to bereave Fathers of
 ‘ their Children, Husbands of their Wives, Guar-
 ‘ dians

dians of their Wards, and Mistresses of their Servants, are aptly taught in those Schools of Abuse [the S T A G E] Therefore I am sorry they are not plucked down, and the School masters banished the City.

Thus much I will tell them, if they suffer those Brothel-Houses to continue: The Lord will say unto them, as the Psalmist saith, If thou sawest a Thief thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with Adulterers *.

* Psalm 50,
18.

This I hope is more than enough to convince the Author of *The Defence of Dramatick Poetry*, That Mr. Collier's was neither the First Pulpit nor Preſermon against the S T A G E; and that though the Silence of the Clergy against the Play-house, has been but too universal of late; it hath not been always ſo from the beginning.

By this that Author may likewife perceive, That Men of a different Kidney and Principle from thoſe of the Calves-Head-Feasts, or that acted the Tragedy at Whitehall, and accounted Regicide and Rebellion, Religion and Sanctity *, ſtrain as much at the Gnat of the Stage as others.

I would also desire him to conſider, Whether the Opinion of thoſe Reverend Bishops and Divines I have quoted at large, and the Evidence of two repen‐ting Stage-Poets, as to the Danger of the Stage, be not more than enough to outweigh his Banter and Flouts, in denying that the Passions represented on the Stage imprints the ſame Passion into the Audience, because a Man when he sees a Hercules Furens, does not grow ſo mad and pull up Oaks as fast as he; that our Gallants don't preſently fall a Ravishing like a luſtful Tarquin, upon the Representation of that Lascivious Prince; and that our Ladies don't immediately take

* page 13.
*Defence of
Dramatick
Poetry.*

Faint

* page 19. *Taint and Play the Wanton upon the sight of a lewd Thais* *.

The Instances of the Play-Poet, just now quoted, fall but little short of this; and Mr. *Gosson's Paris and Domitia*, and *Menster and Messalina* * School of formerly mentioned *, are enough to confirm it. Abuse.

But, because I hate to be niggardly, he shall have another from *Xenophon* *. That Author

* *Convivium* gives us an Account of the Acting of *Bacchus* and *apud Xeno- Ariadne* by a Syracusian Boy and a Girl, thus,

phon. Oper. Grec. Lat. ' The Syracusian entred like *Bacchus*, with a

Franco- furti. ' Pipe before him, playing a rioting Tune. Then

p. 893, &c. ' Entred *Ariadne* gorgeously apparrel'd like a Bride,

' and sat down before the Company; She did

' not go to meet *Bacchus* as a dancing, nor rose

' from her Seat, but made such Signs as disco-

' ver'd he might have an easie Conquest. When

' *Bacchus* beheld her, he expressed his Passion as

' much as possible in his Dance, and drawing

' near her fell down on his Knees, embraced and

' kissed her; she tho' with some faint resemblance

' of Coyness and Modesty embraced him again.

' At this the Spectators gave shouts of Applause.

' Then *Bacchus* rose up, and taking *Ariadne* with

' him, there was nothing to be seen but Hugging

' and Kissing. The Spectators perceiving that

' both of them were Handsom, and that they

' kissed and embraced in good Earnest, they be-

' held them with great Attention; and hearing

' *Bacchus* ask her, If she lov'd him; and she af-

' firming with an Oath that she did; The whole

' Audience swore, That the Boy and the Girl lov'd

' one another in Reality; for they did not Act like

' those who had been taught only to personate

' those Gestures, but like such as had a mind to

' perform that which they had of a long time

' earnestly desir'd. At last when the Company per-

' ceived that they were clasped in one anothers

' Arms.

Arms. Those that had no Wives swore they would Marry, and those that were Married, took Horse and went Home to their Wives immediately.

C A P. X.

The English State against the STAGE.

THE Author of *The Defence of Dramatick Poetry*, endeavours in the next place to ward off the Blow given to the Stage by English Statutes ; and alledges that the 1st of *Jac.* was but a Temporary Act to hold in force but that Sessions of Parliament *. Which by * pag. 3. his leave is a mistake, the Words being, *That it should continue to the end of the next Parliament.* And it was afterwards continued again by the 3d of *Car.* Cap. 4. to the end of the 1st Session of the next Parliament.

And I must also here take leave to tell him, that Mr. *Prin* ; who it's suppos'd understood the Law as well as he, was of Opinion that the Stage-Players might have been punished in the Year 1633. by Virtue of that Act, which was many Years after the 1st of *James*.

But be that how it will, thus much we have gain'd at least ; That Stage-Players were declared, to be Rogues and Vagabonds, by the three Estates of England met in Parliament ; and ordered to be sent to the House of Correction, to be Imprisoned, set on the Stocks and Whip'd, and if they continued to Play notwithstanding, that they should be burnt with an Hot Iron, of the breadth of an English Shilling, with a great Roman R in the left Shoulder, which should there remain as a perpetual Mark of a Rogue : If they still continued Obstinate, they were

were to be Banished, and if they return'd again, and continued incorrigible, they were to be executed as Felons.

This is the more remarkable, that by this Act the Licenses allowed to be giv'n by Peers, to Players of Interludes by the 39th of Eliz. were taken away, and no reserve made for any Players whatever, and the occasion of the making this Act was, the doubts that arose upon the 39th. of Eliz. and that former Statutes were not so effectual for suppressing those Plays and Interludes, as was expected.

Our Author in the next place, seems to call in Question the Truth, of that Petition of the Londoners to Q. Elizabeth, about 1580 for suppressing the Playhouses. Makes some Raileries upon Mr. Collier, for Rawlidge his Author, because not known to the Booksellers in St. Paul's Church-Yard, or Little-Brittain; makes himself Sport with the Godly Citizens that were the Petitioners, quotes Stow, to prove that Queen Elizabeth, encouraged the Darlings of the Stage, allowed them Liveries and Wages, as Grooms of the Chamber, and insinuates, that the Playhouses mentioned in

* Defence of Dramatick Poetry pag. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. the Petition, were only Gaming-Houses *.

I answer, That Mr. Prin, from whom I suppose Mr. Collier had the Account of this Petition, quotes as his Author, Mr. Richard Rawlidge, his *Monster lately found out*: Printed in London 1628.

* Hist. Mag. stix. p. 492. p. 2, 3, 4. * Which, though it may perhaps be hard to be met with; it does not therefore argue, that there never was any such Author, — and because Mr. Collier has been somewhat defective, in his Quotation here; our Author may be pleased to know, that Rawlidge says in the same place, ' That all the Play-houses within the City were Pull'd down, by Order of Her Majesty and Council upon this Petition, viz. One in Grace-Church-Street,

Street, one in *Bishops-Gate-Street*, one near
Pauls, one on *Ludgate-Hill*, and one in *White-*
Friers.

As to the Favour shew'd afterwards to some of the Stage Players by Queen *Elizabeth*, it argues only a Change at Court, but says nothing for the Lawfulness of the Stage. K. Charles I. who there's no doubt, our Author reckons nothing Inferior to Queen *Elizabeth* in Piety, made a Law in the first year of his Reign, condemning Stage-Plays, and yet afterwards set up Enterludes at *Whitehall*, on the Sabbath Day, which I suppose there's very few will commend him for. If Queen *Elizabeth* design'd to Reform the Stage as she had done the Church, as our Author would seem to insinuate p. 11. The Event hath prov'd, that the Success was not alike. There's few that read Plays or frequent the Play-House, but must own if they will speak Truth, that the Reformation there goes Retrograde, which verifies an Observation of them that I have heard often; That when you have Reformed the Stage all you can, it will be good for nothing: But as one says of Cucumbers, after you have added Oil, Vinegar and Pepper, they are fitter to be thrown to the Dunghill, than taken into the Body.

Upon the whole, however our Author may please himself with his Raileries, this will appear uncontrovertibly true; that the Laws of *England* have many times restrained, and sometimes totally discharged the Stage, whereas he cannot bring one Statute that ever Commanded or Commanded it. By the 4th of *Hen. 4. Cap. 27.* — All Players, Minstrels and Vagabonds, were Banished out of *Wales*, because they had occasioned Mischiefs there: They were forbid by the 12th of *Richard 2. C. 6, 11.* By the 17th of *Edward 4. C. 3.* By the 11th and 19th of *Hen.*

Hen 7. Cap. 12. And by the 33d. of *Hen. 8.*
C. 9. ‘Together with Dicing Houses, and other
 ‘unlawful Games, hecause of Seditions, Conspira-
 ‘cies, Robberies and other Misdemeanours that
 ‘had ensued upon them. By the 3d of *Henry 8.*
C. 9. ‘All Mummers, or Persons disguising them-
 ‘selves with Visors or otherwise, should be feiz’d
 ‘and punished as Vagabonds, upon which *Polydor*
Virgil, who wrote about 10 years after, says,
 ‘That the English who in this are wiser than
 ‘other Nations, have made it Capital for any
 ‘Person to put on a Visor, or a Players
 ‘Habit.

It is evident likewise, that the Stage was restrained by the 14th and 39th of *Eliz.* That it was more severely restricted, if not totally discharged by the first and third of *James*, and first of *Charles*. —— And that the Stage was culpable in those times, as well as now: For Jesting with Scripture, and prophanelly using the Name of God and the Trinity: From all which it will appear to any unprejudic’d Person, that whatever Opinion might have been sometimes entertained of it by the Court, the Opinion of the English State, which includes the Court and Parliament too, hath not at any time been very favourable to it.

CAP.

C A P. XI.

*Seditions and Tumults occasioned by the
S T A G E.*

OUR Author [Page 13.] upbraids Mr. Collier, ‘For not quoting a more Modern National Opinion against the Stage, ‘when it lay under a more Universal Abdication, ‘viz. in the Reign of those later Powers at the Helm; who with no little Activity leaped over the Block, and the whole *Whitehall-Stage* ‘it stood upon, and yet stumbled at the Straw, &c. ‘A profane Comedy and Tragedy, were all Heathen and Antichristian; but pious Regicide and Rebellion were Religion and Sanctity with them. ‘The Camel would go down, but the Gnat stuck in their Throats. — — — He ought by all means to have quoted this National Opinion of the Stage in pure Gratitude to the Patrons of his Book, the Gentlemen of the Calves-Head-Feast, ‘who have made it their particular bosom Favourite, &c.

Here’s a great deal more of ill Nature than Wit, whether we take it with respect to the Nation, to Mr. Collier, or to the particular Party he reflects upon. It’s a Malicious, False and Unmannerly Reflection upon the Nation, to insinuate that King *Charles I.* was cut off by their Authority, when the World knows, that it was the Act of a prevailing Head-strong Faction, contrary to the Sense of the Nation, and of that very Parliament, who began the Opposition to King

Charles for his Tyranny and Oppression : if Levying of Money without Consent of Parliament, and forcing the Citizens of London, and others, that would not lend him the Summs he demanded, to serve as Soldiers in his Fleet and Army, and a hundred other such things may be call'd by that Name. It is Malicious upon Mr. Collier to the highest degree, who is known to the World to be for Passive Obedience, the opposite Extreme : It is as full of Spite, against those who are Enemies to the Stage, many of whom abhor the Memory of that Fact, and are zealous Sons of the Church of England; though at the same time they detest Tyranny be it in Prince or Prelate.

But to repay our Author in his own Coin, we have had a later instance of Friends to the Stage, as Goodman and others engaged in a Design of as black a Nature ; if the Assassination of the bravest Prince in the Universe may be so accounted. But lest they object, That this is but one instance we shall bring Antiquity in for further Evidence ; and in the first Place St. Chrysostom, who * tells us, 'That the Players and Play-hauntings of his time were most notorious Adulterers, the Authors of many Tumults and Seditions, setting People together by the Ears with idle Rumors, filling Cities with Commotions, and were more savage than the most cruel Beasts.'

* Hom. 38.
in Mat.
Tom. 2.

* De Specl.
c. 17, 18.
† De Specl.
l. 2. Ep. 2.
|| Pedagogi.
l. 3. c. 11.

Cyprian †, and Clemens Alexanderinus ‡, declaim against Tragedies and Comedies, 'As Bloody, Impious and Prodigal Pastimes, which occasion Tumults and Seditions.'

Gregory Nazianzen informs us, 'That Plays and Interludes disturbed Cities, raised Sedition among the People, taught Men how to Quarrel, sharpened ill Tongues, destroyed the mutual

'tual Love of Citizens, and set Families at Va-
riance*.

Cornelius Tacitus acquaints us in his *Annals*,
That the Stage-players in *Rome* grew so Seditious
that after many renew'd Complaints against
them by the Pretors, *Tiberius* and the Senate
banished them out of *Italy**.

* *De re&a Educatione ad Selenum*
p. 1063.

Marcus Aurelius testifies, That because of the
Adulteries, Rapes, Murthers, Tumults, and
other Outrages, occasion'd and committed by
Stage-players, he was forc'd to banish them out
of *Italy* into *Hellespont*, where he commanded
Lambert his Deputy to keep them hard at
Work*.

* *Annal.*
Lib. 4.c. 3.

Suetonius tells us †, That in *Nero's* Time
there were so many Seditions, Quarrels, Com-
motions and Misdemeanours in the Roman
Theatre, That *Nero* himself, though he took
great delight in them, suppressed all Plays by a
solemn Edict.

† *Sueton in
vit. Nero.*
Se& 16, 26.

Cæsar Bulengerius informs us, That under *Hy-
patius* and *Belisarius* there were at least 35000
Men slain in a Commotion and Tumult raised at
a Cirque Play*.

* *De Circo*

In the time of *Theodorick King of Italy* we are informed by *Cassiodorus* †, That there were so many Tumults, Quarrels and Commotions raised at Stage-Plays, that he was forced upon the complaint of the People to write to the Senate to punish the Mutineers and suppress their Insolencies: But there being no reforming of them, he gave Orders wholly to suppress them.

Romano.
c. 47.
† *Variarum Epist.*
L. 1. Epist. 20, 30.
L. 3. Ep. 51. and Lib. 7.
Epist. 10.

We have heard already that the Statute of the 4th of *Henry 4. Cap. 27.* restrained them in

Wales, because of the Commotions, Murthers, and Rebellions they occasioned there.

The Statute of the 3d of *Henry 8.* Cap. 9. against Mummers proceeded from the like Cause.

— And we are informed, ‘That *Kets* Rebellion in the 3d of *Edward VI.* was concerted at, and partly occasioned by a Meeting at a Stage-play at *Wimonham* to which the Country-people resorting, were by the Instigation of one *John Flowerdew*, first encouraged to pull down the Inclosures, and then to rebel*.

* *Holinshed.*

p. 1028.

N^o. 20,

30.

NeivisHist.

of *Ket's*

Stirs.

+ Cap. 16.

Nay I refer our Author to his own *Stow* in his Survey of *London* †, where he shall find an Account of diverse Tumults and Riots occasion'd by Stage-Plays.

Those Tumults, Seditions and Rebellions being by the fore-mentioned Authors charged upon the Stage, let the Defender of Dramatick Poetry wipe off the Imputation if he can, or give us as good Authorities to prove that Enmity to the Stage did ever produce such Effects.

C A P. XII.

The Grecian and Roman State, against the STAGE.

THE Defender [Page 14.] triumphs over Mr. Collier for telling us, That the Athenians thought Comedy so unreputable a Performance, that they made a Law, That no Judge of the *Areopagus* should write one, because that only prohibited a Judge from writing

‘a

' a Comedy. An Argument (says our Author)
 ' enough to set *Heraclitus* himself a smiling.

But I would pray the Reviewer not to insult, lest the Athenians themselves should give him a rebuke, and speak their Mind more freely than Mr. Collier has done for them: For if we may believe Plutarch *, ' Though the Athenians put great Honout upon Actors and Play-Poets at first, yet growing Wiser by dear bought Experience at last, when they found that the Stage had effeminated their Spirits, exhausted their Treasures, and brought sundry Mischiefs upon them; they abandoned the same, and enacted a publick Law against it, that no Man should thenceforth presume to Pen or Act a Comedy, and declared all common Actors Infamous from that time forward.

The Defender owns †, That the Lacedemonians + pag. 14. passed a positive Bill of Exclusion against the Stage, and I shall make bold to add their Reasons from Plutarch *, which Mr. Collier and he have both * *Lacon. Inv.* omitted, viz. ' *Left their Youth should be corrupt- stitut. ed, and their Laws derided, and brought into Contempt.*

In the next page he flouts at Mr. Collier, for relating from Tully, ' That the antient Romans counted Stage-Plays uncreditable and scandalous; insomuch that any Roman who turn'd Actor was not only degraded, but likewise as it were disincorporated and unnaturaliz'd, by the Order of the Censors. — This says he, is almost as doughty a Quotation, as his Athenians are; and adds, that their kinder Successors were of a contrary Opinion; for the uncreditable Player was afterwards set *Rectus in Curia*.

If our Author will be pleased to look a little back, add consider the Instances there giv'n him, of the Stages being Banished from *Rome*, by *Tiberius*,

* *De Gloria Athenienſi- um.*

berius, *Nero*, and *Marcus Aurelius*; he will find that the Stage-Player was not then very *Rectus in Curia*; but in the hight of Disgrace, for Reasons of the greatest weight.

But to let him see, that there may be more State Memoirs furnish'd against the Stage, than Mr. Collier has done, though our Author seems to

* pag. 17. question the possibility of it*. He may consult *Livy*, who will tell him 'That *Scipio Nasica*, that great Roman General, did by a publick Decree of the Senate, demolish the Roman Theatres, and forbid their Stage-Plays; as the Bane of their Morals and Valour, the Seminaries of Lewdness, Effeminacy, Idleness, Vice and Wickedness, and inconsistent with the Welfare of the Commonwealth; for which he is very much applauded by *Livy*, *Tully*, *St. Augustine*, and others*.

* *Liv. l. 43.*
Aug. de Ci-
vit. Dei l. 1
c. 31, &c.
and lib. 2.
c. 12, &c.
† *Marcus*
Aur. c. 14.

The Emperor *Augustus*, though once very much delighted with Plays himself, banished all the Players and Jesters out of *Rome*, for those intolerable Mischiefs they did occasion †. It is also very remarkable, that this great Emperor, ordered 'Stephanio an Eminent Player, to be thrice whipt for coming to his Pallace on a Holy-Day, in hopes of a great Reward; first in the Attire of a Page, and next in that of a Roman Matron, and personated both of them with so much Art, that he seemed to be the very Person he represented. The Actor complaining, that he order'd him to be whipt three times, whereas he commanded Vagabonds to be whiped but once; he replied, Thou shalt be whipt the first time, for the Injury done to the Roman Matron, whom thou didst represent. The second time, for thy Presumption in doing it in my Presence, and the third time, for the loss of Times which thou hast occasioned, to those that heard and saw thee †.

* *Dion. Cas-*
sius Rom.
Hist. l. 54.

The

The saying of this Mighty Prince is yet more remarkable: When great Intercession was made, for *Pilas* or *Pilades* the Player, whom he had ordered first to be whip'd, and then banish'd out of the Country, *viz.* ‘That *Rome* had been powerful enough to make her Enemies stoop, and now she is not able to banish Jesters and Fools, and that which is worst of all, they have the Presumption to vex us, and yet we have not the Courage to reprove them.

The Emperor *Trajan*, when intreated by his Courtiers to hear a noted Player, replied thus, ‘It did not become the Majesty of a Prince, that any such vain thing should be acted in his Presence, — That those who move Princes to behold such Enterludes, deserve as great Punishment as those that act them; seeing none ought to present before Princes, such things as may move them to Vice, but rather those that may influence them to Amendment. And afterwards this worthy Emperor, partly out of his own Disposition and partly at the Peoples Desire, abolish'd Stage-Plays, as effeminate Arts and Exercises, which dishonoured and corrupted the Roman State, for which, *Pliny* the second commends him highly, in his *Panegyric* †.

We are likewise informed by *Tacitus* *, ‘That when *Pompey* erected his Theatre at *Rome*, he was blamed for it by the Senators; because it would be a means to make the People spend their time in beholding Plays, and utterly overthrow their Hereditary Manners and Discipline, by new acquired Lasciviousness.

This I hope is enough to satisfy our Author, as to the Opinion of the Roman State concerning the Stage; but if he still object, [that it was at other times set *Rectum in Curia*. I shall answer him in the Words of *Guevara*, ‘That such Roman Princes

^{+ Dio in vit.}
^{Trajan. Annal.lib}

14. c. 3.

as were good, did always overturn the Stage ;
 but those that were otherwise maintained it ; so
 that one of the ways, to know which of those
 Princes were Vertuous or Vicious, was to observe
 whether they maintained Players, Jesters and
 Jugglers among the People, or not †.

* *Guevara*
 his Dial of
 Princes.

C A P. XIII.

*Christian Roman Emperors against the
S T A G E*

† pag. 17. **T**HE Author of the Defence says further,
 + That as scandalous as the Civil Law
 had rendred Players, their scandal was
 so little a publick Nusance, that the Christian
 Government even in its primitive Lustre, always
 suffered them amongst them.

This is so far from being true, that *Constantine* the Great, who is own'd by all, to have been the first Christian Emperor withdrew himself from the Stage Plays, made in the third year of his Consulship, to drive away the Pestilence and other Diseases, and contemn'd and rejected those Enterludes, which grieved the Pagans exceedingly — and when he was established in the Empire, he abolish'd the Plays and Enter-
 * *Zosim. l.2* ludes, as intollerable and pernicious *.

Baron. Spon-

dan. Anno

303. §. 3. *Theodosius* the Great, banished all Players by a publick Edict, ‘ As the Plagues of those Places where they were permitted, and shut up the Cirques and Theatres at *Antioch* as the Fountains of

Euseb. de

vit. Constan.

lib. 3. cap.

52, 56.

‘ of all Wickedness, and the Nurseries of all Mis- † *Eutrop.*
‘ chief †. *Rer. Rom.*
Hist. L. 13.

Page 173. *Baron. Spondan. An 385. Sect. 9. Chrysost. Hom. 17. ad pop.*
Antioch.

The Emperors *Valentinian* and *Gratian*, and *Valens*, Enacted; ‘ That Stage-Players should be
‘ debarr’d from the Sacrament, as long as they
‘ continued their Playing, and that it should not
‘ be administred unto them in their Extremity;
‘ when on their Death-beds, though they desir’d
‘ it, unless they first renounced their lew’d Pro-
‘ fession, and protested solemnly, that they would * *Codex*
‘ not return to it again in case of Recovery *. *Theodosii.*
Lib. 15.

Tit. 5. de spez. Lex. 2, 4. Tit. 7. de Scenici. Lex. 1. Spondan. Epit. Baron.
An. 371. Sect. 10.

Justinian the Emperor published an Edict,
‘ † That all Christians should refrain from Acting † *Justin.*
‘ and Beholding of Stage-Plays, because they *Cod. l. 1.* *Tit. 6. de*
‘ were not the least of those Pomps of the De- *Episc. Lex.*
‘ vil, which Christians solemnly renounce at Bap- *17, 18.*
‘ tism.

C A P. XIV.

The Antient Philosophers against the S T A G E.

THE Author of the *DEFENCE* goes on to ridicule Mr. Collier for his Quotations, from *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Plutarch*, *Livy*, *Valerius Maximus*, *Seneca* and *Tacitus* *. * *P. 18, &c.*
‘ *Aristotle* (he says) did not carry Matters so high as to a total Exculfion, but allows them as

' as an innocent Diversion to Persons of Maturity
' Age and Discretion.

In Answer to which I shall, (as I have already
in other Cases) supply the defect of Mr. Collier's
Quotations, and bring Aristotle to Answer for him-

* Lib. 2. c. 6. self, who in his Rhetorick * speaks of Comedians
thus, viz. ' That their whole Employment is to
' survey and deride the Vices of other Men, which
' they proclaim upon the Stage, and therefore
' they are to be numbered amongst Traducers and
' Evil-speakers.

In his Politicks he says, ' That those who be-
' hold the Gestures and Actions of Stage-Players,
' tho' they be neither accompanied with Musick
' nor Poems, are notwithstanding moved and af-
' feeted according to the Nature of the things
' they see acted; And though he allows those of
riper Years to be admitted to offer Sacrifice at
such Plays, where Lasciviousness was allowed to
the Gods by the Laws; yet he says, ' Magistrates
' must take care that nothing filthy or obscene be
allowed either in Shows or Pictures *; and ex-
cludes those Stage-plays out of his Republick,

N^o. 21. Lib. 7. as being apt to *debauch the Minds and Manners of*
c. 17. *Youth, with their Scurrility and Lasciviousness.*

* Page 26. The Reviewer * is angry with Plato, as quoted
by Mr. Collier, for telling us in a Line and an half,
' That Plays raise the Passions and pervert the
' use of them, and by consequence are dangerous
' to Morality: He thinks that *Plato* ow'd that
' Justice to the World a-round him and Posterity
' after him to read a little longer Esculapian
* Dialog. ' Lecture upon so Epidemick a Disease *.

2, 10. To gratifie our Author, and again to supply
Mr. Collier's defect, I'll make bold to acquaint
him with some of *Plato's* Sermon-work upon
that Text, as he is pleased to call it in the page
before quoted.

This

This great Philosopher in his Book *De Republica*, says, ‘That Comical and Tragical Poets and Poems, render Men Effeminate, corrupt their Judgments, treat of Leacherous Subjects, nourish those Lusts that ought to be dried up, and give them a Commanding-power over Men, whereas they ought to be kept in Subjection; and for those Reasons, and because he knew they would corrupt Mens Manners, and bring the Gods into Contempt, he banished them out of his Commonwealth.

I am mistaken if our Author don’t think this Sermon sharp enough, though it be but short; And whereas he objects, that we have only the bare word of those Philosophers, for the heavy Charge they bring against the Stage; the Reply is easy, that their Charge is verified by the concurring Testimonies, and Experience of all Ages, and I wish in my Heart, that we could give them the Lie from our own.

Then as to *Tully* and *Plutarch*: The Defender will have ‘em ‘To be only for Checking of Stage- Plays, when too Licentious; as the Bane of Sobriety, and an Excitation to Lewdness *.

* Page 20.

But if *Tully* and *Plutarch* may be heard speak for themselves, it will appear otherwise: The former *de Officiis* *, ‘calls them Prodigals, who lay out their Money upon the Stage; In other Places, he condemnes all Amorous Plays and Poets, as infecting Mens Minds and Manners; and therefore adviseth the Romans to abandon (not to reform) them, lest they should effeminate and corrupt them, as they had done the Grecians, and so subvert the Empire †. And in his Oration for *Quintius* *, speaking of the Skill of *Roscivs* the Actor, he says, that he was only fit to appear on the Stage; but when he considered his other Qualities, he says, It was pity he * *Tusculan.* *Quest.Lib 4* near the end. *De Leg. Lib. 1.* the like. * *Pag. 225.* should

' should ever come there : Which, as St *Austin*
 ' descants on it, was a plain declaration, that a
 ' good Man ought not to come to the Stage, and
 ' that Stage-Players were accounted infamous a-

^{† De Con-} ' mongst the very Pagans † : And with him *Ter-*
^{sensu Evan-} ' *tullian* agrees, in his Book, *De Corona Mi-*
^{gelistar.c.2.} ' *litis* *.

^{* Cap. 5.} P. 75. As to *Plutarch*, that famous Moralist and Historian, ' he disapproves all Stage-Plays, not only as lascivious Vanities, occasioning much prodigal and fruitless Expence, to the great damage of the Commonwealth, but as contagious Mischiefs which blast the Vertues, mar the ingenious Education, and corrupt the Lives and

^{† Plutarchi} ' Manners of all those that frequent them †.

^{Solon.Lacon} This Champion of the *Drama*, makes himself *Instituta.* Merry in the next Place, with Mr. *Collier's* Quo-

^{† Page 21.} tations, from *Livy* and *Valerius Maximus* †. But whether he mistake Mr. *Collier* or not, I am sure he mistakes his Authors: For *Livy* says in express terms, ' That the Plays though instituted to appease the Gods, did neither deliver the Peoples Minds from their superstitious Fears, nor their Bodies from their infectious Diseases; but on the contrary, the *Tiber* overflowed the Cirque in the midst of their Sport; whence the People concluded, that the Gods were displeased with the Attoneinent †; so that our Author has lost all his fine Raillery, on his taking it for granted, *That the Plays made Peace in Heaven, though Valerius Maximus says, they raised Wars on Earth.*

^{† Liv.dec.1.} L. 7. § 3. The next Scoff is on *Seneca*, for quarrelling with the Stage, because it gain'd Ground on the Philosophy School, and bereft him of his Scholars *. But the Gentleman might have seen from Mr. *Colliers* Quotation, that *Seneca* had other Causes of Quarrel, viz. ' That the Stage occasion'd a mispending of time, the decrease of knowledge,

^{* P.22,23.} ' the

' the sinking of Reason, and the destruction of
' good Manners ; because there Vice made a sens-
ible approach, and stole upon the Audience in
the disguise of a Pleasure, or words to that effect*.

But if we will hear *Seneca* speak for himself,
View.
he is yet more plain, and tells us expressly, ' That
' when Men and Women have tipp'd their Fore-
' heads with Brats by long frequenting the Stage ;
' the next News we hear of them is, that they
' take up their Lodging in a Bawdy-house; or
(because I would do him no wrong) take it in his
own words. *In hoc Mares, in hoc Feminæ tripu-
diant, deinde sub Persona cum diu trita frons est,
transitur ad Ganeam**.

And therefore he advises *Lucilius*, to avoid the
Play-house, and the Company that haunted it,
' because they were able to corrupt a *Socrates*, a
' *Cato*, or a *Lælius*. He adds, There is nothing
so destructive to good Manners, as to fit idling
in the Play-house ; and hence takes occasion to
bewail the great Concourse of the Roman Youth
to the Theatre, as a fatal Symptom of a decli-
ning State †.

The Defender of the *Drama*, would Vindicate
Nero against *Tacitus**, for hiring decay'd Gentle-
men to play on the Stage, because he thought it
no Degradation to his imperial Dignity, personal-
ly to act Plays himself; and seems to think it a
mighty Honour to the Stage, that *Nero* was plea-
sed to be an Actor in Person : But takes no notice,
of what *Tacitus* tells us, ' That *Flavius* and o-
' ther noble Romans, conspired the Death of that
' Monster, and effected it too for that very Reason,
' lest the Commonwealth should be utterly ruin'd,
' by the Peoples addicting themselves any longer
to the Theatre †.

To these I shall add the Testimony of some *Lib. 15.*
other Antient Philosophers, because our Author § 9, 10.
upbraids

* *Show*

P. 236.

* *Natural*

Quest. I. 7.

† *Epift. 7.*

* *Pag. 23.*

+ *Annal.*

upbraids Mr. Collier with the smallness of the number he has quoted, and the first shall be *Solon*.

Who being accounted the Wifest of the Antient Greek Legislators, his Opinion must reasonably be accounted valuable; and what that was we are informed by *Plutarch*, *viz.* ‘That he rejected Stage-plays as lying and deceitful Fictions, which would quickly teach the People, to Cheat and to Steal, to play the Hypocrite and Dissemble, to Circumvent Men in their Dealings, to the prejudice of the Publick, and therefore were * *Plutarchi Solon.* not to be tolerated in a Commonwealth *.

Pag. 31.

His Dialogue with *Theispis* the Tragedian is Remarkable, ‘When *Solon* blam’d him (after having seen him act his Tragedy) for Lying and Cheating so egregiously before a Multitude. *Theispis* thought it a good Excuse when he told him ‘*It was but a Play*: at which the Philosopher struck his Staff upon the Ground with great Indignation, and replied to him smartly, *If we approve this Play of yours, we shall quickly find the Effects of it in our Bargains*: And therefore forbade him to Act any further; telling him his Tragedies were a parcel of unprofitable Lies.

The next is *Lycurgus* the famous Spartan Law-giver, ‘Who (we are informed by the same Author) excluded all Stage-plays out of the Commonwealth, lest they should corrupt their Youth and bring their Laws into Contempt. — The Answer of a *Lacedemonian* to the Ambassador of *Rhodes*, who ask’d, *The occasion of this Severe Law?* is no less observable, *viz.* That *Lycurgus* foresaw the great Damage that Players and Jesters might do in a Commonwealth:

wealth: But however that was, this I know,
(says he) *That it is better for us Greeks to weep
with our Philosophers, than for the Romans to
laugh with their Fools**.

* *Plutarchi
Apotheosis*.

To these we may add the Opinion of *Socrates*, so famous for his Wisdom among the Greeks, Who (by the express Resolution of the Oracle of *Delphos*,) condemned all Comedies, as Pernicious, Lascivious, Scurrillous and unseemly Diversions; and of the great Orator *Isocrates*, who declaims against all Plays and Actors, as Hurtful, Scurrillous, Fabulous, Ridiculous, Invective and Expensive Pastimes, and therefore not fit to be tolerated in a City *.

* *Plato, So-
cates, Apo-
log. Page 12.
and Diog.
Laert. l. 2.*

These being Men of the greatest Repute for Wisdom, Learning and Moral Instructions in all the Heathen Antiquity. It must needs be allowed, that tho' they be few in number, yet their Opinion in this Matter is of more Weight, because agreeable to the Dictates of Refin'd Reason than those of 100 others that approve the Stage, and other Licentious Practices, which always issue in the Ruine of their Followers.

The Reasons they have exhibited for their Aversion to the Stage are not to be Answer'd by our Authors Scoff*. That the particular Opinions of not half a Score of these Dissenting Ethnick Doctors, out of at least half as many hundred of that Fraternity, especially too at their rate of talking, or Mr. Collier for them, is no more a Conclusive Argument, in my simple Judgment, against the Stage, than a *Diogenes* in his Tub and his Rags, or an *Epimantus* at his Roots and his Water, should perfwade any Rational Man from a clean Shirt upon his Back and a good House over his Head, or a good Dish of Meat and a

* Bottle

' Bottle of Wine for his Dinner, *viz.* If he be able
' to purchase it.

If our Author can produce for his opinion, but an equal number of Ethnick Doctors of the like Authority with those we have quoted against it, he will oblige the learned World, more than any Man has hitherto been able to pretend to; but much more if he can bring us half a Score Hundreds, I must also desire him to consider, that most of the Authors here mentioned, bear a greater Character than that of particular Persons, *Plato, Aristotle* and *Seneca*, were the great Lights of the Gentile World in their time, and their moral Dictates were received as Laws.

Lycurgus and *Solon* were Legislators, and their Doctrine embraced as the Laws of famous Commonwealths: Add to these, the Laws of the Roman Emperors and Senators, and of the several Republicks of *Greece* against the Stage; and we shall find, that the Theatre was not condemned by a few dissenting Ethnick Doctors: But by the greatest Men of the World, in their time, and the wisest and most polite Nations upon the Face of the Earth.

As to *Diogenes*'s Rags and Tub, and *Epiamanthus*'s Roots and Water; Our Author very well knows, they cannot infer the Prohibition of a moderate use of Houses and Raiment, or of good Meat and Drink; because those things are allowed by the Laws of God, Nature and Nations; which cannot be said of the Stage, though at the same time, I must crave leave to tell him, that the mortified Lives of such Heathen Philosophers, will rise up in Judgment against the Debauches and Riots, of most of those who frequent and patronize the Play-house.

C A P. XV.

The Antient Poets against the STAGE.

OUR Author falls next on Mr. Collier's Quotations from the Poets, and in the first place charges him with quoting Ovid's following Lines impertinently,

*Sed tu præcipue curvis venare Theatris
Hæc loca sunt votis fertiliora tuis ;
— ruit ad celebres cultissima femina Ludos :
Copia Judicium sæpe morata meum est ;
Specatum veniunt, veniunt spectenter ut ipsæ
Ille locus Casti damna pudoris habet.*

Ovid. de Arte Amandi. Lib. i.

The Reviewer is in the right, that *Ovid* does not here design to reflect upon the Stage, because then it was his darling Recreation, but he must at the same time own its a fair Confession that the Play-house was the properest place for a Lecher to forage in, which fully answers Mr. Collier's design, and had our Author but turn'd his Eye to the very next page, he might have found a Quotation from *Ovid* for pulling down the Theatre, as a Nursery of Villany.

*Uit tamen hoc fatear : Ludi quoque semina præbent
Nequitia, tolli tota Theatra jube,
Peccandi causam quam multis sæpe dederunt :
Martial cum durum sternit arena solum ?*

Tollatur Circus non tua Licentia Circi est
 Hic sedet Ignoto juncta puella Viro
 Cum quædam spatientur in hac ut amator eodem
 Conveniat : quare porticus ulla patet ?

Trist. Lib. 2.

Such was the difference betwixt *Ovid* when he was carried head-long by the Impetuous Torrent of his Lust, and when he was an Exile and had time to reflect upon his former lewd way of Living.

Being willing to attone for the Mischief he had done by his Lascivious Poem [*De Arte Amandi*] he composed another [*De Remedio Amoris*] wherein as one of the chief Receipts, he prescribes Abstinence from the Stage, and from Reading the Amorous Verses writ by himself and others, thus,

*At tanti tibi sit non indulgere Theatris,
 Dum bene de vacuo pectore cedat amor :
 Enervant animos cytharae caniusq; tyraeq;
 Et vox & numeris brachia mota suis
 Ilic assidue ficti saltantur Amantes
 Quid caveas, Actor, quid Juvet arte docet.
 Eloquar invitus teneros ne ränge Poetas
 Summoneo dotes Impias esse meas, &c.*

Nor is *Ovid* the only Roman Poet that hath thus censur'd the Frequenters of the Theatre. Any Man that peruses *Juvenal* and *Horace*, will find they had no honourable Opinion of it neither.

The former gives an Elegant Description how the prodigal Dames in his time consumed their Husbands Estates, by frequenting the Play-house, as followeth,

*Ut spectet Ludos conductit Ogulnia Vestem
Conducit comites cellam, cervical Amicas,
Nutricem & flavam cui det mandata puerilam
Hac tamen argenti superest quodcumq; paterni:
Levibus Athletis ac vasa novissima donat, &c.
Prodiga non sentit pereuntem fæmina censem, &c.
Non unquam reputant quantum sibi gaudia constant.*

Satyr VI.

Nor had he any better Opinion of the Chastity than of the good Huswifry of those Play-haunting Ladies, as appears by the following Lines,

— *Cuneis an habent Spectacula totis
Quod Securus ames, quodq; inde expetere possis, &c.*

Where he describes their Lewdness in such a manner as would offend chaste Ears to hear it.

Horace expresses himself much at the same rate, as to the practice of the Stage, and its Frequenters.

*Ut quondam Marsæus amator Origenis illi
Qui patriam mima donat fundumq; laremq;
Nil fuit mi inquit cum uxoribus unquam alienis
Verum est cum Mimis & cum Meretricibus unde
Fama malum gravius, &c.*

Sermo. Lib. I. Sat. II.

So that both of them put the Haunters of the Theatre, and of the Bawdy-house in the same Category.

The Reviewer's Reflection, That lewd Persons do also frequent the Church*, is no Apology for the

the Stage. We have a positive command to meet for the Worship of God, but none to frequent the Play-house. And if a Carrion-Crow may be catch'd in a Flock of Doves, as he is pleased to express it, it will not thence follow that the Pigeons must flock to the Rendezouze of the Crows, but the quite contrary, and I must take leave to tell him, that so long as our Stage is kept up, it will be impossible to keep our publick Assemblies pure. They learn such lewd Practices, and wanton Behaviour at the Play-house, that they smell strong of the Infection, when they come to Church. This was the Complaint of Eloquent Chrysostom, against those that frequented the Play-house in his time *. And we find Ovid of the same Mind, that there's no reforming the Uncleanliness of the Town, so long as the Theatres are suffered to stand:

* 74. Hom.
on Mat.

*Quid faciet Custos? cum sint tot in Urbe Theatra,
Cum spectet junctos illa libenter Equos.*

De Arte Amandi. Lib. 3.

If our Author object, that this Satyr is not directed against the Stage, but level'd at the Pits, the Boxes and Galleries. I reply, that the Company discovers the Entertainment, the Carrion Crows will scarcely resort to a Banquet of Sweet-meats, but the scent of a dead Carcase will tempt them hugely. The Poets already quoted, say nothing in Vindication of the Theatre, and Ovid in express terms enjoys the pulling it down.

The Reviewer it seems, has a great Mind to fasten all the Guilt upon the Audience; and therefore it must be allowed as a just Reprisal, to charge the Poets and Actors with their share of the Crimes. We have already heard the Opinion of

of the Fathers and Councils, of the Grecian, Roman and English States, and of the chief of the Heathen Philosophers and Poets, by which it is evident, that they charge the Guilt upon the Theatre it self, as well as on the Actors and Spectators; and I have likewise brought in the Evidence of Forreign and Domestick Historians, to prove that those concerned in the Stage, have frequently broke the Peace, by Tumults, Seditions, and other Villanous Disorders; by all which it appears, that the Play-house ever since its first Institution, has been a common Nusance, and shall now take the Liberty, to give a brief Character of their Writers and Actors, from Authors of unquestionable Credit, and the two repenting Poets, that have already oblig'd us with an Anatomy of the Stage.

C A P. XV.

The Character of the Stage-Poets and Players.

THE antient Romans held Players in so much Disgrace and Contempt, because of their vicious and dissolute Lives, that they disfranchis'd and removed them from their Tribes, as being a dishonour to the Roman Blood, and the noble Parentage from whence they derived their Original, and totally Banish'd them at last *. The Grecians drove them out of their Country, upon the same account, as we have already heard from *Plutarch* and others. The Primitive Church threw them out of her Communion, and the first Christian Emperors threw them

* *Valerius Maximus lib. 2. c. 4. S. 4. Suet. in Triberius*

out of the Commonwealth, as has been proved before.

Gregory Nazianzen said of the Players in his time, ‘that they were ashamed of nothing but Honesty and Modesty; promoted Lewdness, and boasted of their Skill to act and suffer, all manner of Brutal Villanies, even in the Face of the Sun *.

* *Ad Seleuc. de recta E-*

ducatione.

† *Hom. in Matth. 6.*

* *Epist. 1.2*

Epist. 2. Do-

† *De Civit. Dei l.2. c.4*

* *De vit. in Christo l. 2.*

† *De Repub. lib. 6. c. 1.*

* *Note in Aug. de civ.*

Dei, l.2. c.13

St. Chrysostome says, ‘They are infamous Persons, and deserve a thousand Deaths, because they Personate those Villanies which the Laws of all Nations command Men to avoid †, — *Cyprian* calls them, ‘Masters of Wickedness, wishes that *Eucratius* could see their Secrets, and their Chamber Doors open : He accuses them of Sodomy, and all manner of Villanies, and of condemning that abroad, which they commit at home *.

St. Augustine calls them, ‘most villainous Fools, and commends the Prudence of the Romans, for dis-franchising them †. — *Nicolaus Cabasilas* says, ‘there can be nothing more wicked or villainous than a Stage-Player *.

Bodin writes, ‘That their Profession is nothing else but an Apprentiship of Sin, and a Trade of Wickedness, which leads to Hell †.

Ludovicus Vives says, ‘that the Roman Stage-Players must needs have been dissolute Villains, given up to all manner of Wickedness, when they could not be suffered to live in that City, where there were so many thousands of profligate Citizens *.

The Author of the third *Blast of Retreat*, one of our penitent Poets, Characterizes the Stage-Players thus; ‘That their Conversation is like their Profession ; they are as skilful in the Practice of Uncleanness, as in acting it ; That their talk on the Stage, declares the inward disposition

tion of their Minds, and that every one of them chuses that part, which is most agreeable to his own inclination ; That he could not but lament to see them bring up youth in filthy Discourses, unnatural and unseemly Gestures, and in Baudry and Idleness ; That he wondered how any Father could delight, to see his Son bereft of Modesty and train'd up in Impudence. —— He calls the Actors, the School-Masters of Sin in the School of Abuse. —— They are notoriously known to be the same in their Life, as they are on the Stage, that is Roisters, Brawlers, Ill-dealers, Boasters, Stallions, Ruffians, &c. and love nothing that is Virtuous.

Mr. Goffon, the other Repenting Stage Prodigal, gives the Players the Character following †, viz. ‘That they are uncircumcised Philistines, who nourish a Canker in their own Souls ; ungodly Masters, whose Example doth rather Poi-
son than instruct, and therefore advises People, if not for Religion, yet for Shame, lest the Gentiles should judge them at the last ; to withdraw from the Theatres with noble *Marius* ; to appoint a Punishment for Players, with the Roman Censors, and to shew themselves to be Christians, not to be drawn by wicked Spectators, from Virtue to Vice, from God to Mammon ; and that so they should fill up the Gulph, that the Devil by Plays had digged to swallow them up.

Plays confuted, and
School of Abuse.

This I think is sufficient Evidence to prove, that the Crime is not altogether chargeable on the Pits, Galleries and Boxes, but that the Poets and Actors, have the principal Share of the Wickedness ; and I hope the Frequenters of the Playhouse, will take notice of this Gentlemans Ingratitude, and avoid frequenting the Stage, seeing the very Patrons of the Theatre, charge the Wickedness of it upon them.

CAP.

C A P. XVI.

*The Fathers defended, against the Defender
of the Drama.*

HE falls next upon Mr. Collier's Quotations from the Fathers, the Defects of which I shall not now offer to supply, having quoted the Fathers, whose meaning the Advocates of the Stage would pervert, at large already; I shall only therefore take notice of the Reviewers Assertion; That *Tertullian's Arguments* are chiefly upon these two Heads, *viz.*, *That Pleasure was a bewitching thing, and that the Magistrates dis-countenanced the Players, and cramp't their Freedoms.*

The Falshood of this Assertion will be obvious to every one, that reads what I have quoted from *Tertullian*, under the Head, of the *Fathers against the Stage*; but as a further answer, I shall give him Dr. Hornecks excellent Abridgment of *Tertullian's Arguments*, in his Book of Delight and Judgment, as follows.

I know what is commonly objected, That the Reasons why the Fathers, are so much against the Christians seeing of a Play, was because the Heathenish Idolatries were acted to the Life, upon the Stage, and that Proselytes might not be in danger of being entic'd to Idolatry, was a great Motive why they inveighed so much against Sights of that Nature: But those that use this Plea, must certainly not have read the Fathers, or if they have read them, have not considered all their Arguments; for to go no farther

' ther than *Tertullian*; after he had condemned
' those Sights, for the Idolatries committed on
' the Stage; he produces other Reasons, for
' which they are utterly unlawful †. As,

+ *Tertul.de*
Spec. c. 15.

I. Because the Spirit of the Gospel is a Spirit of
' Gentleness; but the Actors are forc'd to put
' themselves into a Posture of Wrath, and Anger,
' and Fury, and the Spectators themselves cannot
' behold them, without being put into a Passion.

II. Because Vanity, which is proper to the
' Stage, is altogether Foreign to Christianity.

III. Because we are not to consent to Peoples
' Sins.

IV. Because Men are abus'd in these Places,
' and neither Princes nor People spared, and this
' bieng unlawful else where, must be unlawful
' too upon the Stage.

* cap. 16.

† cap. 17.

V. Because all Immodesty and Scurrillity is
' forbid, by the Law of the Gospel, and not only
' acting it, but seeing and hearing it acted.

VI. Because all Players are Hypocrites †, seem
' to be what they are not, and all Hypocrisy is
' condemned by the Gospel.

† cap. 23.

VII. Because the Actors very often belie their
' Sex, and put on Womens Apparel; which
' is forbid by the Law of God.

VIII. Because these Plays dull and damp De-
' votion and Seriousness, which is and ought to be
' the indelible Character of Christians *.

* cap. 25.

IX. Because it is a Disparagement to God, to
' lift up those Hands to applaud a Player, which
' we use to lift up to the Throne of Grace.

X. Because Experience shews, how the Devil
' hath sometimes possessed Christians in a Play-
' house, and being afterwards cast out, confessed
' that he had reason to enter into them, because
' he found them in his own Place †.

† cap. 27.

XI. Because no Man can serve two Masters,
' God

'God and the World, as those Christians pretend
'to do, that frequent both the Church and Stage.

'XII. Because though some Speeches in a Play
'are Witty and Ingenious, yet there is poison at
'the Bottom, and Vice is only coloured and gild-
'ed with fine Language and curious Emblems; that
'it may go down more glib, and ruine the Soul
'more artificially.

[†] Pag. 36. The Reviewer comes next † to play all the Artillery of his Wit and Banter against *Tertullian's* instance of the Devil's having given it as a Reason of his possessing a Christian Woman, that he found her on his own Ground, [viz. the Play-house] — Such a Discovery, he thinks the Devil would be the last that would make. But had he considered those several Passages of the Gospel, where the Devil was forc'd to own our Saviour to be the Son of God, tho' he came into the World to destroy his Kingdom, and to Subvert his Tyrannical Empire over the Children of Men, this Confession of Satan would have been no such matter of Wonder to him.

I hope our Author is not a *Manichee*, to believe that the Devil has an infinite Power, or derives his Existence from himself. If Scripture Authority have any Weight with him, there he may find it reveal'd, That the Devil can neither do all the Mischief he would, nor yet resist the Commission of the Almighty, tho' Rebellion be the very Essence of the Diabolical Nature. He could not so much as destroy one of *Job's* Cows or Sheep without a Permission, tho' he would willingly have ruined that Holy Person, and all *Job c. i. 2.* that belong'd to him *. Nor could he forbear to destroy *Ahab* by his Lies when the Almighty com-
* *I K. 22.* manded it *, tho' it had been more his Interest to have had that Monster of Wickedness continued on the Throne, and therefore I must take the liberty

berty to acquaint the Reviewer, that his Banter is prophane, and occasioned merely by want of thought, when he says, 'That if the Sworn Enemy of Man, have any such generous Principle in him; Dives had no occasion to supplicate Abraham to send a Messenger to caution his Friends on Earth, but might e'ne have beg'd the civil favour of that kind Errant, from one of his own Tormentors †. The Almighty never Commissi-^{f page 37.}oned the Devil, nor yet his Chaplains of the Stage to Preach Repentance unto the World, that work he reserved for more hallowed Instruments. — I shall hasten to absolve this point, when I have told our Author, that it ill becomes any Man who calls himself a Christian, to question Tertullian's Veracity in a Matter of Fact like this, that the Enemies of our Holy Religion could easily have disprov'd, had it been false, and that the Credit of that Learned Father, for the great Service he did to the Chrtian Cause, has set him above the Snarls and Banter of the Play-house, or its Advocates: As for his Scoff that this is the only instance of Seizure of that kind, amongst all the Millions of Christians, who since that day have frequented the Play-house; Its of a piece with the rest. I have prov'd that the Devil, though he be the God of this World, is far from being absolute, his Reign is confin'd to the Children of Disobedience, and those he leads Captive at his own Will; so that his Seizures of this kind, consists of infinite numbers, though his Seizures of the other sort be restrain'd to a few: And by the concurring Testimonies of the Fathers, Councils, and best of Chrtians in all Ages, as has been already made out: He triumphs nowhere more visibly, than upon the Stage; This I have prov'd by the Confession of the two Penitent Play-Poets above mentioned, but that in the Mouth

Mouth of two or three Witnesses every thing may be establish'd: I shall add that of an Actor, who dying at the Bath about 1630. sent for his Son, whom he had bred up to that same way of Living. and abjured him with his last Breath, and floods of Tears, that as he tendered the eternal Happiness of his Soul, he should abjure and forsake his ungodly Profession, which would enthrall him to the Devils Vassalage for the present, and plunge him for ever into Hell at last.

* Hist. Mastix 910

If our Author consider it, he will soon be convinced, that the Seizure of the Soul is incomparably more dreadful, than that of the Body; and of this, I shall put him in Mind of one Instance, that was frightful enough, as it is recorded by ^{† His Eng.} Mr. Braithwait, who was present and saw it [‡]. *An English Gentlewoman of good Note, who daily spent the best of her time upon the Stage, falling into a dangerous Sickness, her Friends sent for a Minister to prepare her for her End; but whilst he exhorted her to Repent, and to call upon God for Mercy, instead of listening to his wholesome Instructions, she redoubled her Cries, to let her see Hieronimo acted, and as she had liv'd so she died.*

Now I would refer it to our Authors own Conscience, whether he would be willing to make such an Exit. And if this was not a more dreadful Possession, than those mentioned in the Gospel, when the Devil threw the Bodies of those he had made a Seizure of, into the Fire or Water. But to conclude this point, I must crave leave to inform him, that the Devil hath renewed his claim to the Stage, oftner than once since the days of Tertullian, and particularly in Queen Elizabeths Reign; when he visibly appeared on it, in the Bell-Savage Play-house, as they were prophanely acting, the Story of Faustus, to the Terror and Amazement of all the Spectators, and the seizing of

of some of them with a Distraction †.

The Reviewer's Argument *, That 'twas the general Opinion of Christians that Plays were a lawful Diversion, because St. Cyprian, Tertullian, St. Augustine, &c. made it their business to refute that Opinion, is just as consequential as if he should say, that 'tis the general Opinion of the People of England, that Immorality and Profaneness is lawful, because their Preachers Labour to prove the contrary, as to every individual Species of it in all their Sermons and Books on that Subject : — and no less false is his Assertion, *That the Appearance of that general Innocence in those Entertainments, gave them that Reception among Christians that they could not believe them Criminal without some express Divine Precept against them*; for nothing could be more odious than those Practices, and Postures, &c. which the Fathers every where Charge upon the Stage, as I have already prov'd ; and herein also the Reviewer contradicts M. Motteux, and his *Parisian and Church of England Divine*, who tell us the Fathers were against the Stage, because of the Idolatry, Blasphemy, and other Infamous Practices there *, which were very far from Innocence. * Preface to Beauty in Distress p. 14, 15, &c.

— Thus these Champions of a bad Cause, like Troops in disorder, fall foul upon one another.

CAP.

C A P. XVII.

*The Scripture not silent against the
S T A G E.*

ICome next to the mighty Counter-Battery, which the Reviewer has rais'd for the Defence of the Stage, and that is *his more curious Speculations* (as he calls them) upon the Scriptural Silence in that Case, than any that the Fathers have been pleased to make *.

* pag. 39.

'First then (*says he*) as our blessed Saviour was born in the Days of *Augustus*, 'tis known by all Historians, that the shutting up of *Janus*' Temple-doors in his Reign, universally opened those of the Play-houses; ————— and so they continued throughout the Empire many Reigns after him.

If any Man should say, that when our Saviour was born, the Devil and the World kept Holy Day for Joy, he would be foully mistaken, and yet according to this Author, it would seem they did so; 'For at our Saviours Birth (*says he*) Play-houses were open'd throughout the whole Empire. But what if I should tell him, that the Devil, finding himself disarm'd by our Saviours Birth, and bereft of the Sword which he had influenced Men to sheath in one anothers Bowels for a long time, betook himself to another Weapon, and that was the Lusts of the Flesh, to make War upon their Souls.

This Speculation may not perhaps be so curious as that of our Author; but I am of Opinion it may be every whit as solid; seeing not only the

the Antient Fathers, but even the Heathen Roman Historians, charge the Play-houses with all Manner of Lewdness, and *Augustus* himself (as I have already said) banished the Stage-Players out of *Rome* because of the Mischiefs they occasioned.

The Reviewer must not pretend that the opening of the Theatre was an Effect of our Saviour's Birth, or a suitable way of Rejoycing for it; his Forerunner *John* the Baptist, taught a contrary Doctrine, and prepared the Jews to receive him by Repentance and Mortification.

When our Saviour came himself *at the fulness of time*, the way of his Entrance into the World, was the severest Reproof that ever was giv'n to the Pomps and Vanities of it. His Childhood and Youth, were wholly estrang'd from all those frothy Diversions, and when he entred on the Ministry, he taught a sublime and refined Purity, that was absolutely inconsistent with the Practice of the Stage. He instructed his Followers in the full Extent of the Law, that it did not so much as allow a Wanton Glance or a Lewd Thought, than which there cannot be a more effectual Condemnation of the Theatre, which by the Testimony of all Historians and Ages, has ever been a Nursery of Impurity, and chiefly supported by Persons of a dissolute Life.

But to return to our Author.

' Now it may raise a little Wonder (says he)
' why the Apostles that went forth by a Special
' Command of the Almighty, to Convert all Na-
' tions, Preaching Repentance and the Kingdom
' of Heaven, they that so exactly performed that
' great Commission as to arraign and censure Vice
' and Impiety from the highest to the lowest, in
all

all its several Branches, not only pronounced
 their louder *Anathema's* against the more crying
 Sins, but read Divinity Lectures ev'n upon the
 Wardrobe and Dressing-Box, correcting the very
 Indelicacies of the Hair, the Apparel, and each
 uncomly Gesture, that these Missioners of Sal-
 vation should travel through so many Heathen
 Nations (the Gentiles they were sent to call) and
 meet at every turn the Theatre, and the Stage-
 Players staring them in the very Face, and not
 make one Reprimand against them, is a Matter
 of very serious Reflection.

' Had the Play-house been as St. Cyprian calls
 it, *The Seat of Infection*; or as Clemens Alex-
 andrinus, much to the same Sense calls it, *The
 Chair of Pestilence*; and to join the Authority
 of the Unclean Spirit along with them, *The
 Devil's own Ground*: I am of Opinion in this
 case, that those Divine Monitors the Apostles
 that set Bars to the Eye, the Ear, the Tongue,
 to every smallest Avenue that might let in the
 Tempter, would hardly have left the broad
 Gates to the Play-house so open, without one
 Warning to the unwary Christian in so direct a
 Road to Perdition. Such a Discovery I believe
 would have been rather the Earlier Cautionary
 Favour of some of our kind Evangelical Guar-
 dians, than the Extorted Confession of our grea-
 test Infernal Enemy 200 Years after.

To Answer the Reviewer in his own way of
 Argument.

Had the Stage been so useful to the Happiness of Mankind, to Government and to Religion, as Mr. Dennis pretends to prove it in his late Book, or had it been such an Excellent Mean for Recommending Virtue and Discouraging Vice, as others of its Advocates would have

have it to be, then certainly it may raise a little Wonder, that those kind Evangelical Guardians should not have somewhere or other dropp'd one Expression at least in its favour, as well as they have made use of the pertinent Expressions of some of the Poets; and therefore their profound Evangelical Silence upon this Head, gives us just cause to suspect that they had a far other Opinion of the Design and Nature of the Theatre.

But to come closer to our Author; had he but seriously reflected upon his own Matter of serious Reflection, it would soon have abated the height of his Wonder; for if the Apostles Preached Repentance, censur'd Vice and Impiety from the highest to the lowest, read Divinity Lectures upon the Ward-Robe and Dressing-Box, corrected the Indecencies of the Hair and Apparel, and each uncomely Gesture, they must by necessary consequence have Preached against the Stage, which is charg'd with the height of Impiety and Vice, superfluous prodigality of Apparel, unlawful disguising of the Sex, and obscene and uncomely postures, not only by the Fathers of the Church, but even by *Ovid*, *Juvenal*, *Horace*, and other Heathen Poets and Historians of those times, as I have proved before; so that our Reviewers Battery is fairly dismounted, and his Cannon pointed against himself: for by a Conclusion lawfully deduced from his own Premises, it infallibly appears that the Apostles did not only give one, but many Reprimands to the Theatre, tho' they did not express it by name.

And I will make bold to tell him further, that the Apostles in those very Injunctions by which they set Bars to the Eye, the Ear, and the Tongue, did as infallibly shut up all the Avenues of the Theatre, as they barricado'd those that might let

in the Tempter, if beholding Vanity, hearing Blasphemy, and speaking Lies in hypocrisie come within the reach of their Inspir'd Prohibitions. And therefore well might St. *Cyprian* say, that the Divine Wisdom would have had a low Opinion of Christians, had it descended to be more particular in this Case; when the Stage was known to abound with Idolatry, Profanity, Cruelty, Blasphemy, Sodomy, and such other Impurities, as were not so much as once to be named amongst Christians.

I pass over his Remarks on the Inconsistency betwixt Mr. *Collier's* Defence of the Modesty and Chastity of the Antient Heathen Poets and Stage, and his quotations of the Fathers that imply the contrary. Mr. *Collier* is able to defend himself, and an Over-match for him on this Subject. There's no doubt, but the Stage at its first Institution, was chaster than ours, and if we may give credit to *Livy*; The Plays at first, were plain Country-Dances, where the Youth jok'd upon one another in Artless Verse, and their Gestures were as plain and simple as the rest of the performance. The Poets that Mr. *Collier* quoted are modester than ours, and yet it will not follow that the horrid Impieties charg'd upon the Stage by the Christian Fathers and Roman Historians, is all slander; or that the Innocence of the Primitive Stage was the cause of the Scriptural silence against Plays.

The Theatre was opposed by the Jews before the Coming of Christ; tho' nowhere condemned by name in the Old Testament: Yet that People to whom the Oracles of God were committed, understood it to be contrary to the Law of *Moses*, and the Discipline of their Nation; and therefore they conspir'd to cut off *Herod the Great* in the Theatre which he had built at *Jerusalem*, whilst

whilst he was beholding his Stage-Plays *, which * *Josephus.*
they had certainly effected, had not the Plot been *Antiq. Jud.*
discovered, whereof *Herod* taking the advantage *lib. 15. c. 11.*
he brought in his Theatrical Enterludes, which
at first were pleasing to none but the Heathens
that sojourned there, and were at last attended
with an Apostacy from the Laws of their An-
cestors, a corruption of Discipline, and dissolu-
tion of Manners. And a remarkable Judgment
followed on *Herod Agrippa*, who appearing on
the Stage in a Silver Robe of admirable workman-
ship, and being receiv'd by the Acclamations of
the People as a God, because of the beams which
darted from his Apparel by the Reflexion of the
Sun, was immediately smitten with a grievous
Disease by something that appeared in the shape
of an Owl hovering over his head; and being
tormented for five days with an intollerable
pain in his Bowels, was at last miserably de-
voured by Worms. From this opposition of the
Jews to the Stage, we may reasonably infer, that
no such method of pastime or diversion, or of re-
commending Virtue, and discouraging Vice, was
allowed by the Church of God under the Old
Testament, and that therefore there's much less
reason to think that any such thing was allowed
or approved by the Christian Church under the
New Testament, whose Worship has less of Ex-
ternal Pomp, but much more of the Spirit and
Truth than that of the Jews had.

From hence likewise we gain another Argu-
ment, that if the Jews thought the Stage dis-
charg'd under the General Prohibition, *To take*
the Names of the Heathen Gods in their mouths,
and the Article of their Law which *forbad Men*
and Women the promiscuous use of one anothers
Apparel, the Primitive Church had much greater
Reason to conclude that the Theatre was forbid

to them under the General Terms of *Idolatry, Sacrifices of Idols, Vanities of the Gentiles, Rudiments and Customs of the World, corrupt Communication, Bitterness and Evil Speaking, keeping company with Fornicators, fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, Filthiness, Foolish Talking and Festing which was not convenient, being partakers with the Children of Disobedience, Rioting, Chambering and Wantonness, &c.* all which the Stage was infected with, as hath been prov'd already. So that the Advocates of the Play-house may with as much reason infer, that *Apostacy, Atheism, Incest and other Crimes* are not forbidden by the Scriptures, because not expressly nam'd there, as argue that the Play-house is not discharg'd because it is not particularly mention'd in Sacred Writ.

If it be objected, That all those Arguments are against the Corruption of the Stage, but not against the Original innocent Constitution of Plays *. I answer, that there never was a time, when the Stage was free from all or part of those Corruptions, that it was of an Heathenish and Diabolical Institution, as has been already proved.

That at the very first, if we may credit *Livy* in the place before quoted, the Diversification of the Stage consisted in Revelling, Dancing and Foolish Jesting, and gradually grew worse and worse, and tho' the Romans had Censors to restrain its Abuses, and the Greeks admired and promoted it at first, yet both those Wise Nations found themselves under a necessity of overturning it at last : And I have already shew'd that the Ends for which the best of its Patrons pretend it was Erected, are better provided for by the Almighty ; and therefore we cannot pretend any necessity for it, except we reflect on his Wisdom and Power.

* Defence
of Dramatick Poetry.
p. 54.

' The Reviewer comes next to argue, that the
 ' Drama was not censur'd by the Gospel, because
 ' St. Paul quotes a Saying of the Comick Poet
 ' Menander, viz. *Evil Communication Corrupts good
 Manners*, and likewise those of other Poets,
 ' in the A&ts of the Apostle, and Epistle to Titus,
 ' viz. *In him we live, and move, and have our Be-
 ing, as certain of your own Poets have said, for
 we are also his Off-spring.* — and ev'n a
 ' Prophet of their own, said the Cretians, are
 ' always Liars, Evil Beasts, slow Bellies, &c. †

^{+ Pag. 55,}
56.

But I must beg leave to tell him, that the Premises will not bear his Conclusion, and that he might with as much strength of Reason argue, that the Apostle did not censure the Idolatry of the Ephesians, because he quoted the Inscription on one of their Altars *TO THE UNKNOWN GOD*, and thence took occasion to instruct them in the Knowledge of the true God, who alone was Incomprehensible. Can any Man, tho' but of a 5th rate sense, allow this to be a good Argument, *the Apostle from their own Poets convicts them of their Epidemical Wickedness, the mischief of bad Company, and that they owe their Being and Preservation to the Almighty*: — *Therefore he did not censure the Stage.* Certainly such a Logician would be hissed out of the Schools. Our Author by the same sort of Argument may prove, that I approve his Book, because I have quoted his Arguments, and turn'd them against himself, as the Apostle turn'd the Concessions of the Heathen Poets, against those that follow'd and admir'd them.

Of the same Nature is his Inference, *That because the Holy Ghost himself has spoke in the Words of a Menander and Epimenides : It's surely a little Vindication of the Innocence of the Profession t.* † ^{Pag. 57.}

If he mean the Art of Poesie, there's no Man of

Sense disputes its being Innocent and Useful ; but if he means a Stage-Poet, it's just such another Argument as this, *Maro pick'd Gold out of Ennius's Dunghill, therefore Ennius's Dunghill was an excellent Gold-mine.* — Does not our Author know, *That it is the Light of the Holy Ghost, which enlighteneth every Man that cometh into the World*^{*}, and that Gifts as well as Graces proceed

* *John* i. 19. from him ? must the Holy Ghost therefore, because he again makes use of some of those Divine Beams, which he had graciously darted into the Minds of the Heathen Philosophers and Poets, give his Imprimatur to their Pagan Fancies and lewd Theology ? Our Author's Argument will conclude as strongly for this, as for the Defence of the Stage.

He comes next to Enquire into the Reason of this over-violent Zeal of the primitive Fathers against the Stage, which he finds to be *the unseasonableness of it, because it was then a time of persecution, and that by frequenting the Stage, they herded with their Persecutors and Murderers* †.

The Falshood of this will appear from the Quotations of the Fathers themselves under that Head : These are some of their Reasons, but not all, they laid the Stage under a perpetual Interdict by Arguments naturally deduc'd from the Scriptures. The Christian Councils condemn'd them for the same Cause, and the first Christian Emperors condemn'd them by their Imperial Laws, upon that same Account, as has been already said ; so that our Author discovers his want of Reading or something that's better, when he asserts the contrary *.

* From page 59, to

67.

I shall conclude this Head with the Opinion of the Reverend, Learned and Pious Mr. Richard Baxter, as to the Stage and Reading of Plays and

and Romances, as I find it in his *Christian Directory*: Thus,

' I think I never knew or heard of a Lawful
' Stage-Play, Comedy or Tragedy in the Age that
' I have liv'd in, and that those now commonly
' used are not only Sins, but heinous aggravated
' Sins; for these Reasons, I. They personate odious
' Vices commonly Vitiously, that is, 1. Without
' need reciting sinful Words, and representing
' sinful Actions, which as they were Evil in the
' first committing, so they are in the needless Re-
' petition, Eph. 5.3, 12. But Fornication and all
' Uncleanliness or Covetousness (or Lust) let it not
' be once named among you, as becometh Saints;
' neither Filthiness nor foolish Talking nor Festing,
' which are not convenient, but rather giving of
' Thanks. — For it is a shame even to speak of
' those things which are done of them in Secret.
' 2. Because they are spoken and acted common-
' ly without that Shame, and Hatred, and Grief
' which should rightly affect the Hearers with
' an Abhorrence of them, and therefore tend to
' reconcile Men to sin, and to tempt them to take
' it but for a matter of Sport. II. There are
' usually so many Words materially false (tho'
' not proper Lies) used in such A^ttings of Good
' and Evil, as is unsavoury, and tendeth to tempt
' Men to Fiction and false speaking. III. There
' are usually such multitudes of vain Words pour'd
' out on the Circumstantial as are a sin themselves,
' and tempt the Hearers to the like. IV. They
' usually mix such amorous or other such ensnar-
' ing Expressions or Actions as are fitted to kin-
' dle Men's sinful Lusts, and to be Temptations to
' the Evils which they pretend to cure. V. A great
' deal of precious Time is wasted in them, which
' might have been much better spent, to all the
' lawful

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' the Evils which they pretend to cure. V. A great
' deal of precious Time is wasted in them, which
' might have been much better spent, to all the
' lawful

Mr. Baxter's Opinion

' lawful Ends which they can intend. VI. It is
' the preferring of an unmeet and dangerous Re-
' creation, before many fitter; God having al-
' lowed us so great a choice of better, it cannot
' be lawful to choose a worse. The Body which
' most needeth Exercise with most of the Specta-
' tors, hath no exercise at all, and the mind might
' be much more fruitfully Recreated many ways
' by variety of Books or Converse, by contem-
' plating God and his Works, by the Fore-
' thoughts of the heavenly Glory, &c. So that it
' is unlawful as unfitted to its pretended Ends.
' VII. It's usually best suited with the most carnal
' Minds and more corrupteth the Affections and
' Passions, as full Experience proveth. Those that
' most love and use them, are not reformed by
' them; but commonly are the most loose, un-
' godly, sensual People. VIII. The best and
' wisest Persons least relish them, and are com-
' monly most against them; and they are best
' able to make Experiment, what doth most help
' or hurt the Soul. Therefore when the sensual
' say, We profit by them as much as by Sermons,
' they do but speak according to their Sense and
' Lust: As one that hath the Green-Sickness may
' say Coals, and Clay, and Ashes do me more
' good than Meat, because they are not so fit to
' judge as those that have a healthful State and
' Appetite. And it seldom pleased the Conscience
' of a dying Man, to remember the time he had
' spent at Stage-Plays. IX. Usually there is much
' cost bestowed on them, which might be better
' employed, and therefore is unlawful. X. God
' hath appointed a stated means of instructing
' Souls by Parents, Ministers, &c. which is much
' more fit and powerful. Therefore that time
' were better spent; and it is doubtful whether
' Play houses be not a stated means of Man's In-
' stitution,

stitution set up to the same pretended use as the Church and Ministry of Christ, and so be not against the second Commandment. For my part I cannot defend them, if any shall say that the Devil hath apishly made these his Churches in Competition with the Churches of Christ. XI. It seemeth to me a heinous Sin for Players to live upon this as a Trade and Function, and to be educated for it, and maintained in it; that which might be used as a Recreation, may not always be made a Trade of. XII. There is no mention that ever such Plays were used in Scripture-times, by any godly Persons. XIII. The Primitive Christians and Churches were commonly against them: Many Canons are yet to be seen by which they did condemn them. [Read but Dr. Jo. Reinolds against *Albericus Gentilis*, and you shall see unanswerable Testimonies from Councils, Fathers, Emperors, Kings and all sober Antiquity against them. XIV. Thousands of Young People in our time have been undone by them; some at the Gallows, and many Servants, who run out in their Accounts, neglect their Masters Business and turn to Drunkenness and Whordom and Debauchery, do confess that Stage-plays were not the last or least of the Temptations, which did over-throw them. XV. The best that can be said of these Plays is, that they are controverted and of doubtful Lawfulness; but there are other means enough of undoubtful and uncontroverted Lawfulness, for the same honest ends; and therefore it is a sin to do that which is doubtful without need. Upon all these Reasons, I advise all that love their Time, their Souls, their God and Happiness, to turn away from these Nurseries of Vice, and to delight themselves in the Law and Ordinances of their Saviour, Ps. 1. 2, 3.

As

' As for Play-Books, and Romances, and Idle Tales, I have already shewed in my Book of Self-denial, how pernicious they are, especially to Youth, and to frothy empty idle Wits, that know not what a Man is, nor what he hath to do in the World; they are powerful Baits of the Devil, to keep more necessary things out of their minds, and better Books out of their hands, and to poison the mind so much the more dangerously, as they are read with more delight and pleasure, and to fill the minds of sensual people with such idle fumes and intoxicating fancies, as may divert them from the serious thoughts of their Salvation, and (which is no small loss) to Rob them of abundance of that precious time which was given them for more important business, and which they will wish and wish again at last, that they had spent more wisely. I know the Fantastick will say, that these things are innocent, and may teach men much good (like him that must go to a Whore-house to learn to hate Uncleanness, and him that would go out with Robbers to learn to hate Thievery.) But I shall now only ask them, as in the presence of God, 1. Whether they could spend that time nobetter? 2. Whether better Books and Praetices would not edifie them more? 3. Whether the greatest Lovers of Romances and Plays be the greatest Lovers of the Book of God, and of a holy Life? 4. Whether they feel in themselves that the Love of these Vanities doth increase their Love to the Word of God, and kill their sin, and prepare them for the Life to come, or clean contrary? And I would desire men not to prate against their own Experience and Reason, nor to dispute themselves into damnable impertinency, nor to befool their Souls by a few filthy words, which any but a Sensualist may perceive

' to

to be meer deceit and falsehood : If this will not serve, they shall be shortly convinced and answered in another manner.

C A P. XVIII.

Reflections on some late PLAYS.

First on *Beauty in Distress*.

I Come next to make some Remarks on M. Motteux's Play call'd, *Beauty in Distress*, which it seems he and his Friend Mr. Dryden, propose as a pattern of Reformation. It were easie in the first place to observe from Mr. Dryden's Poetical Epistle to the Author, that it contains an unmannerly and malicious Reflection upon the Clergy in general.

Rebellion worse than Witchcraft they pursu'd
The Pulpit preach'd the Crime, the People ru'd
The Stage was silenc'd, for the Saints would see
In Fields perform'd their plotted Tragedy.

Mr. Dryden's Wit and Extraordinary Talent of Poetry are uncontrovertible ; but his turning Renegado from the Protestant Religion, which abhors the Doctrine of Killing KINGS, and running over to the Church of Rome, which hath advanc'd that Practice to the Dignity of Merit, renders him as unfit as any Man alive to charge his Neighbours with Rebellion, and is no convincing Proof of his extraordinary Judgment, either as to Divinity or Politicks.

If his Charge had been levell'd against Sibthorp and

and *Manwaring*, and their Disciples on the one side, or against *Hugh Peters* and the Tub-Preachers of those Times on the other side, there's few Men of Sense would have thought themselves concern'd in the Reflection; but as it is levell'd against all the Clergy without distinction, he must give me leave to tell him that it may easily be prov'd, that *Sibthorp*, and *Manwaring*, and the rest of their passive Obedience-Doctors, who taught, *That the King was above Law, and might dispose of our Estates Lives and Liberties, without Consent of Parliament*, were the chief Fire-brands of the Rebellion, and set the two Constituent parts of our Government [the King and Parliament] together by the Ears: And were by consequence chargeable with the Reveries of *Hugh Peters* and the rest of the Enthusiaſtical Tribe, who carried things to the other Extream, when the People were render'd Mad by Oppreffion. But as for the Body of the English Clergy, either Episcopal or Presbyterian, the Charge is Malicious and Injurious. The best of the Church of *England* Clergy opposed the Stage in thoſe times, as well as the Presbyterians, yet it's known that both of them oppoſ'd the carrying on of things to that height which they afterwards came to. And I must beg leave to tell him that his Brethren of the Stage by usurping upon the Sabbath, and ridiculing the Pretensions of the People to their Liberty and Property had no ſmall ſhare in bringing on the Calamities he ſpeaks of. Or if he be for a later Instance, I can oblige him with one that is ſtill fresh in Memory, Viz. That the Nonjurant Clergy in this Reign, the Pupils or Followers of *Sibthorp* and *Manwaring* in that of King *Charles*, were ſo zealous for the lately-intended French Invasion, that no leſs than a Troop of them did offer their Service to hallow the Rebellion, and ſome of them

them did so little abhor the Assassinating of Crown'd-Heads, that they absolv'd the Assassins at Tyburn, without any Declaration of their Repentance for that horrid Crime.

But to come to the Play it self.

I leave it to the Consideration of the Author, whether the following Lines of the Prologue, don't come under the Apostolical Prohibition of filthy Talking and foolish Jesting, which is not convenient:

— 'Twas studied to be paid in *Lent*,
A time when some of you so nice were grown
Y'u abstain'd from every kind of Flesh but one.

And a little lower.

You know a Reformation's coming on,
Then bear these Moral Scenes with Resignation,
T' inure you to be wean'd from darling Forni-
(cation).

The wisest of Princes and Men hath branded them with the Character of FOOLS, *that make a mock at sin* *, and whether these Lines be * *Prov. 14. ver. 9.* adapted for any thing else, but to make the Audience laugh instead of being sorrowful for sin, let any Man judge. Nor is the Jerk at the Reformation very becoming, especially considering how much it has been recommended of late both by King and Parliament.

Then as to the Epilogue spoken by Mrs. Brace-girdle.

Poys'ning and Stabbing you have seen me 'scape
And, what you think no mighty thing, a Rape:
But

But can poor Poet scape —————

————— What shall he do?

H'as sent me a Petition here for you,

That's it — cry mercy! that's a Billet doux.

Before I go any further, I must beg leave to make some Remarks. Here's one great difference, I perceive betwixt the Church of Christ and the Play-house, which *Tertullian* and others call the Church of the Devil.

In the former Women are by Apostolical Prohibition forbid to speak, and commanded to learn

^{† 1 Tim. 2.} in silence †; but in the latter their Discourses,

^{ver. 11, 12.} Songs and Parts are the principal Entertainment, which is certainly inconsistent with the Natural Modesty of the Sex, especially when they are not ashamed to speak openly of those things which the Apostle says, *it is a shame even to mention* †.

^{† Eph. 5.12.} Let any modest person judge if this look like a Scheme of a Reformed Play, to bring a Woman upon the Stage to charge the Audience with accounting a Rape but a small thing, which the Law of Nations makes capital, and then impudently to produce a Billet doux, or in plain English, an appointment to meet some Cullie.

Then he goes on with the Petition thus.

To you Great Wits, dread Criticks, nicest Beaux,
Gay Sparks with borrow'd Wit, and Masks with
(borrow'd Clothes,

You who to chat or ogle fill yond Benches,
Or tempt with Love our modest Orange Wenches,
Rakes, Cuckolds, Cirts, Squires, Cullies great & smal.

I think Sirs this Petition's to you all.

It cannot be denied but here's a great deal of truth spoken in jest, and that this is a just enough description

description of most of those that constantly haunt the Stage, and of their end of coming thither, a plain confession, that most of them are Carrion Crows, as the Reviewer words it, and frequent the Theatre, as the Ordinary where they can best suit their Appetite, but it must at the same time be own'd that this sort of Reproof is more accommodated to inflame than to quench their Lusts, which is demonstrable by this, that if the Crows did not find Carrion there, they would soon grow weary of the Haunt.

I pass over the other Scoff at the Reformation, and come to her description of the Devotion of the Poets.

But 'twere in vain to mention every Head ;
I guess a Poet's Prayers are quickly said ;
He seldom prays but to avoid his Curse ;
An empty Play-house, and an empty Purse.

A great deal of truth again, and a confirmation of the Character given of the Stage-Authors, by Mr. Goffon, and the other Repenting Poets formerly mentioned. But is this Horrid Neglect of Devotion, and especially making sport with it, suitable to the Character of one who pretends by his Poems to reform others ? and does it look any thing like deference to that Apostolical command of *praying without ceasing* †? which imports at least a constant aptitude, for that necessary Duty, and a conscientious frequency in it. And does not the Experience of all Ages testify that the Stage is so far from being a proper Motive to that or any other Christian Duty, that it does rather make its frequenters negligent in all Duties.

[†] 1 Thes.
5. 17.

But now to come to the Play it self,
It may, if compared with many others, deserve
to be call'd Chaste and Modest ; yet I do not see
what

what edification could redound to the Audience from the Pattern set them by the Fond *Laura*, who Courts *Don Richardo* with so much importunity, that it must needs make the Females blush, and the young Widdows, if there were any there, ashame'd of their Representative, and serve as a Lesson to teach the young necessitous Sparks of the Town to Entrap Rich Widdows in the like manner. Her Expression to *Richardo*, that they would live like Gods, smells too rank of the Libertine, and can leave but a sorry Impression upon the Audience. *Richardo's* Cunning, dissembling Expressions and Tricks in his Courtship, are no very proper Lessons to be taught our Young Men, who are but too much deprav'd already; nor has the last Line of his Dialogue with *Laura*, when the Monks diverted them, so much of a Chast Tendency as becomes a Play that's propos'd as a Pattern of Reformation.

Then as to the Maiden Ladies, *Morella* and *Melinda*, in the second Act, their Conference about *Fabiano* and *Placentia*, favours not of so much Innocence as becomes persons of their Character, but is plainly accommodated to please the Amorous *Gusto* of those that frequent the Stage. Neither does *Placentia* behave her self with such Extraordinary Modesty as to deserve the name, of a Pattern of Virtue or Prudence. Nor does her Lover *Fabiano* act the part of an Obedient and Prudent Son; such Examples cannot be very edifying to the Spectators, but on the contrary, teach Young Gentlemen the way how to gratifie their passions, to the ruine of themselves, and the grief of their Parents.

Richardo's attempt to Ravish *Placentia* in the fifth Act, with so many circumstances, sometimes raving mad with anger, and at other times burnt up with raging Lust, which flames out into brutish Express-

Expressions and Actions, is so very gross, that such a Representation cannot be defended, but must expressly fall under the condemnation of *filthy talking, the appearance of Evil and corrupt Communication*, which could have no tendency to the *Edification of the Hearers*, but rather to inflame Inordinate Lust. If there be *such things done in secret, whereof it is a shame for Christians to speak*, certainly a Rape with its odious circumstances must be of the number. The very name of such kinds of Vice is infectious to corrupt Nature, but much more must such a Representation of it be. I know our Author will have recourse to the common Apology, that he brings the Vicious Person to a Tragical *Exit*, and displays his Crime only to expose it; but that is a poor pretence; we must not do evil that good may come of it, especially when the fatal Experience of our own and former Ages is enough to convince us that those Theatrical Representations nourish Vice instead of curbing it. The Holy Ghost, who knows the frailty of Humane Nature, hath forbid *that Fornication or Uncleanness should be nam'd amongst Saints*, without abhorrence, and much more such Representations of it as may *any way tend to corrupt the Mind*. Many other Remarks might be made upon this Tragedy, but these are enough to shew, that whatsoever our Author may pretend, his Reformation comes short of the Scripture Rule, and is liable to the Exceptions of those very Fathers whom he and his Church of *England* Divine would reconcile to the Stage, and particularly St. Chysoftom, who as I have mentioned already, says, ‘That Stage-Players deserve ‘a thousand deaths, because they personate those ‘Villanies, Obscenities and Adulteries which the ‘Laws of all Nations command men to avoid.

Remarks on the Rape, or Innocent Impostors.

In the next place I shall take notice of a Play, intituled, *The Rape, or Innocent Impostor*, Printed in 1692. And whereof I understand the Author is a Clergy-man, of good Reputation, and therefore am bound in Charity to think that he designed to correct, and not to incourage Vice by his Play; but as the Pulpit, and not the Stage was his business, he was out of his Road when he meddled with Plays; and tho' it be more modest and chast than that call'd *Beauty in Distress*, yet I dare refer it to his own serious thoughts, whether *Genselarius* premeditated Rape upon *Eurione*, his glorying in it after the commission of the foul Crime, and insisting so much upon the satisfaction he had in it, even to the laft moment when he was to die for it, be agreeable to the strict Rules of Modesty; or whether it has not rather a tendency to incourage Lustful Youth to dangerous attempts. Nor is *Euriones* practice, who kill'd her self after the Rape, to be propos'd as a Pattern in such cases. Our Author knows that the Fathers disallowed of all such Representations, that they looked upon them to be contrary to the Scriptures, which methinks should have hindred him from employing himself that way, and so much the more, that he knows the mischief that hath been done to our Morals and Religion by the Theatre, and that others might be influenc'd to take a greater Liberty by his Example.

We need go no further for an instance than Mr. Durfey, in his Comedy call'd, *The Campaigners*, who values himself so much upon his *Conversation with several eminent Men of the Church, and the Assurance of their good Word to prove his good Behaviour*, that he thinks it sufficient

ent to ward off the heavy Charge Mr. Collier has brought against his Comical History of *Don Quixot* †. Nay, a Page or two further, he Tri- †^{Preface to} umphs, and thinks he has sufficiently answer'd Mr. Collier, when he tells him, that Mr. Thomas Campaign-^{ers, p. 3.} *Randolph*, a Gown-man of Wit and Learning, makes it his whole Moral, in his piece call'd, *The Muses Looking-glass*, to vindicate the Stage *. * *ibid. p. 7.* Of such mischievous Consequences is it for Clergy-men to give Countenance to the Play-house, either by Writing for the Stage themselves, keeping Company with Play-Poets, or Defending the *Drama*. I shall not any further urge the Sense of Antiquity against their Practice in that Matter, but would humbly propose to their Consideration, Whether it be suitable to their Character thus to Countenance such Men as have by our Statute-Law been declar'd *Rogues*; whose Profession the best of the Church of *Eng-*
land Divines since the Reformation have writ against as Unlawful, and which Repenting, nay Heathen Poets themselves have condemn'd and abhor'd, as has been already prov'd.

Though they may please themselves with the Lashes which that sort of Men have given to Dissenters, from the Stage, which Mr. Durfey argues as a piece of Merit in his *Collins's Walk thro' London and Westminster* *, and by which he confirms my Conjecture, as to the Reason of the general Silence of the Clergy against the Theatre; yet they will find at last, that they themselves shall not escape, but must partake of the Chastisement, thro' the Backs and Sides of Clergy-men of other Denominations. ————— The Opprobrious Terms of *Say-grace*, *Cuff-cushion*, &c. in the Play call'd, *The Relapse*, are as applicable to those of the Church of *England* as to others, and can serve to no other end, but to render the

Ministry Ridiculous ; and therefore it's but just that such of the Clergy as have been pleased with injurious Reflections upon their Brethren [the Dissenters] should come in their turn to feel the Lash.

It is not to be denied but the Clergy have their Faults as well as others ; and so had the blessed Apostles, who own that the *Treasure of the Gospel is committed to Earthen Vessels* †. And ^{† 2 Cor. 4.} _{ver. 7.} that they had their Humane Frailties like other Men ; but it would scarcely be allowed in any Christian State, that the Theatre should make sport with Peter's *Swearing and Denying his Master*, Paul's *Thorn in the Flesh*, or Barnabas's *Dissention*. Nor by parity of Reason ought it to be allow'd, that the Ministers of the Gospel, should be so treated now, for tho' they have not the same Power with the Apostles, nor their pretensions to infallibility in Doctrine, yet their Office is stamped with the same Authority ; and they are commissioned by one and the same Master.

Reflections on the Campaigners.

I come next to View the *Campaigners*, a Comedy writ by Mr. Durfey, who, it would seem, thinks himself above Reformation.

I am no way concern'd to take notice of his Preface upon Mr. Collier, because I find nothing of Argument in it, but meerly Recrimination, which is nothing at all to the purpose. But this I am sure of, that Mr. Durfey's Comedy could have as little good Influence upon the Morals of his Audience, as Mr. Collier's Books can have upon the Principles of his Readers.

But

But to come to his Play.

The Dialogue betwixt *Van Scopen* and *Mascarillo* in his first Act, can have no other tendency, but to harden such Fellows in their Impiety and to teach them the Art of Drunkenness, Filching and Playing the Pimp.

His Conference betwixt *Dorange* and *Kinglove* is adapted to nothing else but to nourish Vice, and to teach the Method of Debauching Ladies ; and how they on the other hand, may carry on their Intreagues with their Gallants. There's no doubt but Mr. *Durfe* blesses himself for the happiness of his Invention in making *Kinglove* say, *That an Hundred Pistols was enough for an Hundred Princesses, a Price fit for none but a Goddess; and that Jove himself who was the first Whoremaster we read of, that ever gave Money, gave his Mistress Danae not a Farthing more.* This is enough to confirm what I have said before, that the amorous Poems of *Ovid*, and other Heathen Authors, are not fit to be put into the Hands of Youth, till they be reformed and purg'd from their Lascivious Impurities; for till that be done, we can expect no other Improvement of them, than such a profane one as Mr. *Durfe* has here presented us with. In the mean time here's very Civil Treatment for Princesses and Ladies of Quality, that Pistoles a-piece is purchase enough for their Honours.

His Letter too, is a Noble Exemplar for his Ladies to Copy; when they have a mind to treat with a Cully, and his delicate Oaths of *Gad* and *I Gad, Gadzooks* and *Gadzoons*, and Swearing by *Heaven*, are mighty Ornaments for the Discourse of his Gallants; so that they may save

themselves the trouble of Learning any other Rhetorick.

His Banter upon the French Marquis's broken English is a Copy for the Gallican Stage to bring in English Gentlemen speaking barbarous French, with your *Heumble Servityour Monseer*.

His Dutch Burgomaster and English Merchant are admirably fitted to make Trade and Commerce Ridiculous ; though *England* and *Holland* have by that means risen to their present Grandure.

His Dialogue betwixt those Merchants representing the Souldiery, ‘as Rogues with long Chines, full Calves, Varlets, Poltroons, Cuckold-making Rascals that huff and strut about with our Money, that they should all be hang'd when the Wars are done, is very civil to the Gentlemen of the Sword, and calculated no doubt to give them a good Impression of our Merchants and Tradesmen, and to create a good understanding betwixt them.

His *Ragg-carrier of a Regiment* is an honourable Title for *Ensigns* and *Cornets*; *Robbing of Hen-roosts* is as Noble an Employment he has found out for the Soldiers, and his jerk at the Government for *letting their Pay fall into Arrears*, considering the Difficulties the Nation hath labour'd under for want of Money, is of admirable use too.

I come now to his Second Act.

Where we have *Mien Heer Tomas* and *Aniky* his Wife expos'd to our View, as a choice instance no doubt of the Happiness of a Married State. This must needs have been very charming to the Ladies; especially such of them as are inclinable to be *fat*, to hear this modest Reflection upon *Aniky*, *That she importuned her Husband*

so much for his Benevolence, yet so fat was she, and so incapable of Childing, that an Irishman may assoon get a Bantling out of a Bogg. But by Mr. Durfey's leave, *Harlem Meer*, or the *Marrisches about Dort*, had been nearer at hand for a Dutchman; tho' by the way I must tell him, that all National Reflections are unmanly, as well as unmannerly, and were never attended with good Consequences.

Annikys accusing her Husband of Frigidity, and swearing as she was a Calvinist, if she lived a month longer she would have one to connive with her too, is Mr. Durfey's Civility to the Ladies of the Audience, and a Genteel Complement to the Reformation beyond Sea.

Min heer Thomas's Reply, That as the Government gave Toleration of Conscience for their Souls, he would give her one for her Body too, is a handfom Allusion, a neat Raillery on the *Liberty granted to the Dissenters here in England*, and an admirable Pattern of a Good Natur'd Wittal. Well, let's go on to the Conclusion of *Thomas's superfine Answser Gadsbores* (says he) *I fancy we Lie always like two Udders in a Dish without ere a Tongue.* This is an admirable proof of the Modesty of the English Stage; and enough to choak Mr. Collier with a Lie for accusing it of Immorality and Profaness.

Aniky Replies; ‘ Queazy Fellows that have no Appetites, can't relish the finest Haunch of Venison, when a strong healthy stomach would feed heartily and be glad of it. And *Thomas* answers; But if he were to feed upon't ten and twenty Years, as 'tis the case of us miserable Husbands, he would be glad to change it for the Haunch of a Horse. This is admirable encouragement for Married Persons to frequent the Theatre, where they may have such excellent

Lessons of Conjugal Affection and Chastity. These are the Curious Representations that edifie our Beaus more than the best Sermons, and contribute so much to the happiness of Mankind.

But to conclude this Noble Lecture of Chastity, ' Thomas tells her, that she's a gross Barren Hen, ' that is so rank fed, she's uncapable of Breed, and ' yet so greedy on't, that she's eternally Cackling, ' that he would Lock her up over the Stable, ' where she should have Heirs, and the great Gib ' Catt there should Father them; and she tells ' him, that she Roosts among Cravens that have ' got the Pip: If Cocks were good, Hens would ' have Chickens. Now I leave it to the Reader that has any sense of Religion to judge, whether the Evil Spirit of Uncleanness himself could express things in a more fulsom and undecent manner; yet these are the Men, and those are their Methods that are to recommend Virtue and discourage Vice.

I am come next to his *Nurses Song*, Scene II, which with his *Scorich Song*, and his *Reformation Song*, will help to Compose a Psalter for the Devil's Church, as the Fathers call the Play-house. The first Song is an admirable Lesson of Chastity, fit to be sung to Mr. Durfy's Lyre, and may vye for Modesty with any that's to be found in *Ovid* or *Martial*. It's a delicate Sonnet for Nurses to sing to their Young ones, that they may suck in Virtue like Mother's Milk, and must needs tend highly to the Edification of the Sisters and Brothers in their *Teens*, when they take a step into the Nursery to see and divert themselves with their Infant Brothers or Sisters. It must needs leave a Chast Impression upon them to hear Nurse tune out these Modest Lines.

And

And when in due season my *Billy* shall wed,
And lead a young Lady from Church to her Bed ;
Ah ! welfare the losing of her ——————
When *Billy* comes near her to kifs, kifs, kifs.

They that would have their Nurses taught to sing Vertuous Songs, had best send them to Mr. Durfey, who can furnish them with admirable Samplars.

But to proceed; That our Author may make his Comedy all of a piece. His Fable of *Doranges* getting into *Angelica's* Bed in a Woman's Dres, includes a very good Lesson for instructing a wild extravagant Beau, how to debauch and steal a Fortune. Such a Representation as this cannot fail of raising very Chast Passions among the Audience ; and the other part of the Fable endeavouring to match her with *Bondevelt* under the notion of a pure Virgin, contains an excellent Pattern of Moral Honesty, and teaches an Intrigue of special use for imitation.

Then again in the third Scene we have a commendable Character of the English Gentry, *That their Right business is nothing but pleasure*, and that I suppose is frequenting the Stage ; for there, says Mr. Dennis, is the greatest pleasure. But if this be the true Character of the English Gentry, how comes it to pass, that so many of them have rais'd Vast Fortunes by application to Law, Phy-sick, Divinity and Merchandise?

I shall meddle no further with this Lewd Comedy, nor can what I have done already, be justified by any other Argument ; but that it's fit the World should see what an useful thing the Stage is for Reformation of Manners.

C A P. XIX.

Answer to Mr. Dennis's Usefulness of the STAGE.

ICome next to consider Mr. Dennis's Arguments in his Book Entituled, *The Usefulness of the Stage to the Happiness of Mankind, to Government and to Religion.*

The Title is sufficient to discover, that I am to combate a Man of Assurance, who like another Goliath bids Defiance to the Armies of Fathers, Councils, Scriptures, &c. & all that have brandish'd their Swords against the Theatre.

His first Argument is, 'That the *Stage* is Instrumental to the Happiness of Mankind in general, because it pleases them, and Happiness

* Pag. 1, 2. consists in Pleasure *.

The Gentleman not having oblig'd us so far, as to draw his Argument into Form, he must pardon my Presumption if I do it for him, and then I think it will stand thus,

*Whatsoever pleases Men makes them happy ;
But the Stage pleases Men,
Ergo.*

The Falshood of the first Proposition is so manifest from the Experience of all Men, that I cannot but wonder at our Author's Confidence to advance it. The Libertine is pleased with his Paramour, and yet is so far from being happy in his Pleasure that it wastes his Conscience, consumes his Body and ruines his Estate. The Drunkard

kard is pleased with his Bottle, yet is so far from being happy in it, that it has the same dismal effects upon him, as Uncleanliness has upon the Wanton. — The Glutton is pleased with his costly Cates and riotous Banquets, but is so far from being happy in his Pleasure, that he Entails Diseases upon himself and diggs his Grave with his own Teeth. — The Miser is pleased with his Baggs, yet is so far from being happy in them, that he is eat up with carking cares how to preserve them, or to lay them out to the best advantage.

To prove this Argument Mr. *Dennis* says,
‘ That by Happiness he could never understand
‘ any thing but Pleasure, and that he could never
‘ possibly conceive how any one can be happy
‘ without being pleased, or pleased without be-
‘ ing happy.

Let him but take a turn to *Bedlam*, and there he may have convincing Instances of poor Wretches being extreamly pleased with their foolish Conceits, that are far from being happy; or let him visit some of his Friends in a raging Fever, and perhaps he may hear them express a great deal of Pleasure and Delight in many things, and yet poor Creatures fall much short of being hapy.

His own Assertion [p.8.] *That a Man cannot be happy without or against Reason*, perfectly destroys his Proposition, for in all the Cases above-mentioned, those Persons are pleased both without and against Reason, which plainly proves that it is not pleasure, but a Rational Pleasure or none at all that makes a Man happy, otherwise the Brute-beasts, are more happy than the happiest of Men.

So that if this be granted, which no reasonable Man or good Christian can deny, that our Pleasures ought to be ruled by Reason, his Argument will

will prove but a feeble Support to the Stage ; it being highly unreasonable to take pleasure in that which is not only needless, to the ends for which it is pretended, there being other means appointed for that, as I have prov'd already, but comes so far short of them, that by the concurring Testimony of all Ages, it is condemned for producing the contrary Effects.

To set this matter in a Clearer Light, let us take a View of those Pleasures which are to be reap'd from the Stage ; Spiritual Pleasures they are not, for Divinity and Religion are seldom or never mentioned there, but in order to be ridicul'd : Rational Pleasures they cannot be, seeing it is contrary to Reason for Mankind to please themselves with the Representations of Rapes, Murders, and all manner of Villanies, which is the principal part of the Entertainment ; the Punishments allotted them take up the least part of the time, for most of that is spent in representing the Intrigues that the Personal Dramatis carry on for obtaining their lwd Ends, and the pleasure they take in the Enjoyment of their desires, and the Impression of the Tragical Catastrophe is generally defac'd by some Comical Conclusion at last. So that upon the whole the Pleasures that are reap'd from the Stage must needs be sensual ; and if wallowing in them conduce any thing to the happiness of Mankind, then Reason and Religion too have put a horrid Cheat upon us, ought to be banished out of the World, and the only Deity we are to invoke is some *Circe* or other to transform us into Dogs and Swine, that we may be compleatly happy. For Mr. Dennis says (page 6 and 7.) *The Philosophers were Fools to ascribe their Happiness to Reason, for that may often afflict us, & make us miserable, is an impediment to our pleasure, and nothing but Passion can please*

us. The natural consequence of which must be that none but Beasts, Fools and Mad-men are happy in this World.

He tell us, page 8. That it's plain that the Happiness both of this Life and the other, is owing to Passion, and not to Reason; so that he must be the only happy man here that wallows in his pleasures, and indulges his passions. And in the other World he informs us, we shall be delivered from those Mortal Organs, and Reason shall then be no more: We shall lead the Glorious Life of Angels, a Life exalted above all Reason, a Life consisting of Extasie and Intelligence. If this be not a Rhapsody of downright contradictions, there can be no such thing as a contradiction in nature; a Rational Soul without Reason; Understanding without Reason; and Reason dying with Mortal Organs. Nay, there's another Position in the bottom of the 7th page as extraordinary as any of those, and that is, That the very height and fulness of pleasure which we are promised in another Life, must, we are told, proceed from Passion, or something that resembles Passion; at least no man has so much as pretended that it will be the result of Reason. Who it is that has told our Author thus, he would do well to inform us; for I believe this Revelation is peculiar to himself. The Scriptures do indeed say, That in the presence of the Lord there is fulness of Joy, and at his Right hand there are Pleasures for evermore †; Psa. 16.11. but are so far from hinting at any thing like Joy without Reason, that the Works of Creation, Redemption and Providence and the Beatifical Vision of God in his perfections, seem to be plainly reveal'd, to be the Reason of all the Hallelujahs and Raptures of Praise and Joy which the Saints shall Echo forth in Heaven to all Eternity. Abraham is represented to us in Heaven with the use of his

his Reason, and arguing with Dives. We are told that there is Joy in Heaven, *by reason of the Conversion of Sinners*; there's no doubt that those Extasies of Joy are above what our Reason is now able to comprehend, but that Reason and Reflexion should there cease, there's not the least ground to imagine. Our Author owns, that *we shall lead the Glorious Life of Angels*, as to whom it is plain from the Scriptures, that they are reasonable Beings, they make use of their Reason to pry into the Mystery of Redemption, and sing Songs of Praise at our Saviour's Birth; for this very Reason, that God had manifested *Peace upon the Earth and Good-will towards Men*; from all which it's plain, that our Happiness in Heaven will not proceed from Passion, but from our uninterrupted Enjoyment of God, the Reflection upon which with our Reason will occasion eternal and unspeakable joy.

This I conceive will appear yet more plain from the following Consideration, *viz.* That a Man cannot be happy except he know himself to be so, and if we have not the use of our Reason and Reflection, we can never know that we are happy, nor be sensible of the Dangers we have escaped; so that for Mr. Dennis's Heaven we had as good be reduced to our *first nothing* as to enjoy it, seeing, according to his Notion, we must there be depriv'd of the Faculty of reflecting upon our past Dangers and present Enjoyments, which cannot afford a Rational Soul so much Delight, as it may have in a pleasant Dream.

I shall only add, That to conceive a humane Soul without *Reason* after death, is to suppose the very Essence of it annihilated, which is a fair step towards denying the *Resurrection* and the *Eternity of Punishment and Reward*; a Doctrine fitted to the Pallate of the Libertines of the Age, the

the principal Rule of whose Faith and Manners is,

Ede, bibe, dormi, post mortem nulla Voluptas;

Or as the Scripture expresses it,

Let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we must die. *

* *1 Cor. 15. 32.*

If we have not the Exercise of Reason in Heaven we cannot Act Faith upon the promise of God for the Eternity of our Happiness there, which our Reason will tell us we may rest assur'd of, because *he is the God of truth that cannot lie, and with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.* Nor can our service, which is Songs of Praise and Everlasting Delight in the Enjoyment of his Presence be reasonable there, which will make it less perfect than the Service that we are called to here on Earth, which the Apostle tells us is a *reasonable Service* *, nor without it can we contemplate God the Author and Fountain of our Happiness with Delight; for according to Mr. Dennis's Notion, there can be no difference betwixt those unconceiveable Transports of Joy which the Blessed have in Heaven, and the Raptures of a Mad-man, who can give no reason for what he does or what he says; and how this can be acceptable Service to God, let any Man, that has but the least Impression of Religion judge. — Our Saviour tells us, *That Mary lov'd much because much was forgiven her;* Is it then consistent with reason, that we shall be fill'd with Raptures of Love and Joy in Heaven, and not know the reason of it there, as well as we know the reason of our Love to the Almighty here on Earth; which is his Pardoning Grace, thro' our blessed Redeemer.

* *Rom. 12. 2.*

But

But to return to Mr. D's Argument, *That 'tis Pleasure only that makes a man happy*: He is guilty of a great omission in not explaining his terms, and telling us what sort of Pleasure he means; tho' to do him Justice there seems to be no great need of it, when we consider that the Stage is the Subject he treats of, whence those Pleasures are to be reap'd; so that we cannot expect to reap any other Pleasures but those of Sin from such an unhallowed Soil.

But allowing him, *That a Moderate Pleasure in our Lawful Enjoyments here is a happiness*, and a gracious Gift of God, as without doubt it is, that will not prove that we ought to create our selves feigned Objects of Pleasure, as all those Theatrical Representations are, seeing God allows us those that are real. Much less will it prove that we ought to hunt after Pleasure, by having our Passions rais'd, when there's no occasion or proper Object for them, for that in plain terms is a perverting the use of 'em, and forcing them beyond the Intent of Nature. God has endowed us with Love, and Hatred, and inspired Reasonable Creatures with a desire to propagate their own kind in pursuance of that primitive Command, that *they should increase and multiply*; but at the same time he has confin'd that desire to certain Limits, *That every Man should have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband*; whence 'tis evident, that it's unlawful for us to frequent the Stage to have that Passion rais'd toward we know not who, or to endanger its being diverted from the Right Object. And as for Young Persons who are unmarried, the Theatre is the most improper place in the World to seek a suitable Match in, and I believe seldom frequented on that account. I am afraid Juvenal's Observation holds too true of the Modern Theatre.

—Cuneis

—*Cuneis an habent spectacula totis ;
Quod securus ames quodq; inde expetere possis.*

And if they frequent them upon any other account, the raising of their Passions endangers their Chastity.

The like may be said of the other Passions, to have our *Anger and Indignation* excited against we know not who in a Tragedy, is far from the Divine Precept, of *being angry and sin not*. It was never the End for which God endowed us with that Passion, to be angry at Wickedness in shew, but at Wickedness in reality. The same Rule serves for *Pity and Compassion*; we are to extend that towards Men in real distress, and not to have our Compassion excited towards a Chimerical object in a Theatre that needs it not. It will hold the same as to *Mirth and Delight*; we are not to make sport, or to take pleasure either in the sin or misery of others; from all which it is apparent, that we ought not to frequent the Stage for exciting our Passions: But admitting that the raising of the Passions makes a man happy; by Mr. Dennis's own concession, p. 16. the frequenting of the Stage is a very improper mean for it, for there he owns, *that the longer any man frequents Plays, the harder he is to be mov'd*; and therefore we may very well conclude from his own Premises, that the seeing of so many unchaste and bloody Representations, is the ready way to take off and dull that Horror which all men ought to entertain against the real practice of Uncleanness, Cruelty, and the other Vices there represented. This may be likewise prov'd by a very familiar Instance: Butchers, tho' but accustomed to the killing of Beasts, have less horror generally for Murder than other men; and Soldiers, who are

accustomed to behold Slaughter and Blood-shed, are not generally so compassionate and tender-hearted as those who never were in a Field.

^{f p. 19.67,}
&c.

I must observe one thing by the way before I go any further, *viz.* that Mr. Dennis and the Author of the *Review* contradict one another in this matter. The *Reviewer* maintains against Mr. *Collier*, that the Representations of the Stage, don't impress the same Passions upon the Audience †, whereas Mr. Dennis asserts it, and thinks it the Glory of the Theatre that it does so, seeing raising the Passions is the only way to make a man happy. I must declare my Agreement with Mr. Dennis as to the influence of those Representations upon the Spectators, but at the same time must tell him, that the Iniquities there represented, especially irregular Amours, have so strong a party in every man's corrupt Nature, that those Lascivious Representations, Intrigues of Courtship, and Amorous Speeches, have ten to one odds against our Virtue, which taking in Religion to its assistance, is often found too weak, and many times foil'd by corrupt Nature, as appears by the Instances of *David* and *Solomon*, the holiest and wisest of men, and therefore it is that the reproofs and punishments allotted to Vice by the Stage, have never been able to obtain those Ends which its Patrons pretend to, *viz.* the Incouragement of Virtue, and discountenancing of Vice, but hath always produc'd the contrary Effect.

But to take a further View of Mr. Dennis's Notion, that we are made happy by Pleasures, let's examine it a little by Sacred Writ. There we find *Solomon*, who had made the largest Experiment of it, declaring, that all the Pleasures this World can afford (even those refined ones of *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* not excepted) to be no-
Ecclesiastes throughout thing but *Vanity* and *Vexation of Spirit* *.

If

If we take in the Suffrage of the New Testament, there we find our Saviour and his Apostles, condemning this Passion for worldly Pleasures, as the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh and the Pride of Life¹, they expressly forbid us to make any Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof², command us to set our Affections on things above, and not on things below, and to mortifie inordinate Affections³, tells us, that those that are Christ's crucifie the Flesh with its Lusts and Affections⁴, condemn those that are Lovers of Pleasures, more than Lovers of God⁵, number those who serve their Lusts and Pleasures among Fools and Rebels to Heaven⁶, tell us, that our Prayers are denied because we ask things to consume upon our Lusts, or Pleasures, as it's read in the Margin⁷, and inform us, that the Word of God is choaked by the Pleasures of the World⁸.

¹Joh.2.16. ²Ro.13.14. ³Col.3.2,5. ⁴Gal.5.24. ⁵2Tim.3.4. ⁶Tit.3.3. ⁷Jam.4.3. ⁸Luk.8.14.

So much as to Pleasure in general; and then if we come to Particulars, — Inordinate Pleasure in Riches or Covetousness, is condemned as Idolatry¹, a Lustful Look after a Woman is censur'd as Adultery². If we consider our Apparel, there we are commanded to be modest³. If we look to our Dyet, the Scripture informs us, that a Glutton shall come to Poverty⁴, and strictly forbids us, Rioting and Drunkenness⁵. If we consider our Discourse, there's no corrupt Communication to proceed out of our Mouth⁶, but our Speech ought always to be with Grace, and seasoned with Salt⁷, foolish Festing and filthy Talking is also discharged⁸. And in the whole, the Apostle tells us expressly, That those who live in Pleasures, are dead while they live⁹: (which tho' spoken particularly of Widows, does by parity of Reason extend to all Christians.) We are commanded to rejoice, as if we rejoiced not, to use this World, as

* 1 Cor. 7. *not abusing it* *, *to behave our selves as Strangers*
30, 31. *and Pilgrims in the World* †, *and to avoid all Bit-*
† Heb. 11. verse 13. *Bitterness, Malice and Evil-speaking* *.

Eph. 4. 31.

Then seeing it is so, how can any Christian indulge themselves in Passion, or Transports of Pleasure in any sublunary Thing? How can they allow themselves in those foolish Jests, filthy Discourses, and immoderate Laughters that are occasioned by Comedies; or in that Wrath, Clamour, Malice and Revenge which breath forth every where in Tragedies? How can they that are call'd to Mourn over their own Sins, and those of others, laugh at the Follies and Lewdness of Whoremongers represented on the Stage, or how can they in Conscience take pleasure in the Representations of those things to the Eye in Publick, that they ought to be ashamed to hear spoken of, as committed in Secret? How dare they that are commanded to work out their Salvation with fear and Trembling, delight in such Wantonness, Jollity and Revelling? With what Conscience can they that are commanded to redeem their time, mispend it so unconscionably in the lew'd Theatre, or with what Peace of Conscience can they lavish out Money in such needless Pleasures, when so many of the poor Saints and Servants of God are starving for want of Necessaries.

Mr. Dennis in the latter part of his first Chapter seems to recant his Epicurean Lecture in the
 † Page 8. rest of it, and tells us †, *the Passions must be rais'd in such manner as to take reason along with them*, which how he will reconcile to his former Positions, *that Reason often afflicts and makes us miserable, hinders our Pleasures, and Combates our Passions* †, and that nothing but Passion in effect can please us, and nothing but Pleasure can make us happy †. Let him see to it. Perhaps he was

was exalted to his own Heaven, and wrote those Contradictions when he was deliver'd from his Mortal Organs, and his Reason had left him †. + Page 8.
And if it was so, he had as good have conceal'd his Extatical Raptures, for any great Feats, they are like to do in the World, they may perhaps make Quakers; but sure I am they can never make Christians: And thus I leave it to the Judicious Reader to consider, whether he hath prov'd that the Stage is Useful to the Happiness of Mankind.

In his Second Chapter he attempts to prove, That the Stage is more particularly Instrumental to the Happiness of Englishmen, — and the Argument he makes use of is, *That the English are the most Splenetick People in Europe*, of a gloomy fullen Temper, uneasie to themselves and dangerous to the Government. This is enough in all Conscience to give them a fit of the Spleen, were they never so good Natur'd; but to alleviate our Anger, he tells us, it's the fault of Heaven, *the reigning Distemper of our Clime*; and to oblige us further, he directs us to the *Drama*, as our Remedy.

I am afraid our Author is neither a Traveller, Historian nor Polititian, else he would scarcely have ventur'd on such a Reflection: Let him but waft himself over for a Month into *Spain*, and take a turn through *France* into the Empire of *Germany*, don't let him forget to take *Holland* in his way Home; and then let him spend some Weeks in turning over the Histories of those several Countries, and I am much mistaken if he don't find himself convinc'd by Experience and Authority, that our Neighbours are as fullen and morose as we, have been as uneasie to one another, and endanger'd their Governments as often,

and yet all of them have had the Enjoyment of the *Drama*.

I must likewise beg leave to tell him, That the good Nature of Englishmen has been for a long time taken notice of, and that I have read it as an Observation from as good an Author as himself, that there's no other Language has a word to express it.

I must likewise desire him to give a Reason, Why the Splenetick Temper of the Nation should not make the Government as dangerous to the People, as it renders the People dangerous to the Government, seeing the Administration must always be in the Hands of Englishmen ; and I would pray him if he can to give me an Instance where he has read of a better Understanding betwixt Prince and People than there was betwixt Queen *Elizabeth* and her English Subjects ; or if he can parallel the Instance of the present Government, that any Monarch did ever venture to leave his Dominions so frequently, and with so much Confidence and Security, as his present Majesty has done, notwithstanding the Faction of a dethron'd Prince in the midst of us, and a powerful Enemy at War with us abroad, at all times ready to Encourage them to rebel : And then I shall yield him the Point, That the English are more Splenetick than their Neighbours.

But now as to his Remedy [the *Drama*.]

He tells us, 'That the Passions are seldom any where so pleasing, and no where so safe as in * Page 10. 'Tragedy'. But seeing the Representations there are generally contriv'd to represent the sudden turns of Fate, the unhappy result of Violence & Injustice, and the Intrigues carried on for the suppressing of Tyrants, I am afraid it will scarce be proper

proper for a Splenetick People: And thus we see how well he has prov'd, That the Stage is more particularly Instrumental to the Happiness of English-men.

In his third Chapter he pretends to answer the Objections from Reason, and denies that *the more the Passions in any Man are mov'd, the more obnoxious they are to be mov'd, and the more unruly they grow* †. This he says is contrary to common ^{+ p. 16.} Experience, because *the more any person frequents Plays, the harder he is to be pleas'd and mov'd*. But by Mr. Dennis's favour, his Answer is nothing to the purpose, or just no more than this, *that the longer a man eats Beef, the less he cares for it*: He knows the old saying, *Fucundissima Voluptas quam rario usus commendat*, a man may be cloy'd with the greatest Dainties. But can he deny that the more a Cholerick Man's Passion is mov'd, the more peevish and outragious he grows; and the more the Letcher's Passion is mov'd, the more lustful and brutish he grows, so long as Nature will keep pace; or the more the Miser's Avarice is mov'd, the more covetous he grows, till his mouth is fill'd with dust. If he can deny this, he is fit for his own Heaven, where his Reason shall be no more †.

In the next place he denies that *Corruption of Manners proceeded from the establishment of the Drama upon the Restoration of K. Charles the 2d.* 1st. Says he, *Because we never heard any Complaint of the like Corruption of Manners before the Restoration of K. Charles the II. tho' the Drama flourish'd in the Reign of K. James I. as Mr. Collier tells us, with the like Licentiousness* †. By Mr. Dennis's leave here's a contradiction in Terms, a *Stage as licentious as ours at present, whose Abuses he owns in the same page to be palpable, and yet no Complaint of Corruption of Manners*. But be-

^{+ p. 8.}

^{+ Page 19.}

cause I will give him a better Authority than his own, let him read Mr. Prin's *Histriomastix*, and there he will find Complaint enough before the Restoration of K. Charles II. and sufficient cause for it too.

The 2d Argument, *That the Corruption of Manners is greater in France, tho' their Theatres are less licentious than ours,* will stand him in little stead; for supposing it true that the Manners of the French are more corrupted than ours, which I am afraid will scarcely be granted: tho' their Theatres be less licentious, their Religion is more, which allows them to be as wicked as the Devil can make them, provided they have but Money enough to pay for a Pardon, or fury enough to persecute the Protestants. *That the Germans are greater Drinkers, and the Italians more inclinable to Unnatural Lust, tho' they have less of the Drama than we:* Perhaps they will charge the Cause upon Heaven as he does, and impute it to their Clime; but can he say that if they had more of the Drama, they would not be more addicted to those Crimes than at present they are. If he will give himself the trouble of reading the Authorities I have formerly quoted, he will find both those Crimes, and particularly the latter charg'd upon the Stage: Nor can Mr. Dennis assign any Reason why going from the Theatre to the Tavern with a Miss, or other lewd company, as is but too common, should not occasion Drunkenness and Sodomy both.

* p. 20.

His 3d Argument is †, *That the Corruption of Manners upon the Restoration appeared with all the fury of Libertinism before the Play-house was re-established.* And that the Cause of that Corruption could be nothing but that beastly Reformation, which in the time of the Late Civil Wars, begun at the Tail instead of the Head and

and Heart, and which oppressed and persecuted Men's Inclinations, instead of correcting and converting them, which afterwards broke out with the same Violence that a Raging Fire does upon its first getting Vent: And that which gave it so liscentious a Vent, was not only the Permission but the Example of the Court. Which having so journ'd for a considerable time both at *Paris* and in the *Low-Countries*, united the Spirit of the French Whoring to the fury of the Dutch Drinking.

Here's Civil Treatment to the Parliament of *England*, a parcel of *beastly reforming fellows*, *aad a reforming Tail too*. But by Mr. *Dennis*'s leave, whoever's the Head, the Parliament is the Brains; they have all the trouble of Contriving, and one half, nay some say two thirds of the Authority of Enacting Laws, and no sinall share in putting them in Execution; so that for them to attempt a Reformation when the Court would not, proves them to have been the Men, and some body else *the Beast*. But to pass that, I must intreat Mr. *Dennis* to be merciful to his own Arguments, and not always to cut their Throats with his own Hands. For first, he tells us, *That the Cause of that Liberinism, was nothing but that beastly Reformation*. And then he informs us, that *it was permitted & encouraged by the example of the Court, who had united the Spirit of the French Whoring to the fury of the Dutch Drinking*; so that he is resolv'd the Court and Parliament shall have it betwixt them, and not a Farthing matter which, so the Stage be but clear on't. And he hath also oblig'd the World with a very important Discovery, that *persecuting and oppressing of Liberinism, was the Cause of Corruption of Manners*.

But alas! the poor man in one of his heavenly Extasies, *when he was delivered from the Mortal Or.*

Organs of his Reason, turns Cat in Pan, plays *Sir Martin Marr-all*, and falls foul upon his Friends of the Stage; for in the very next words he tells us, *That the Poets who writ immediately after the Restoration, were obliged to humour the deprav'd tastes of their Audience. For if the Poets of those times had writ without any mixture of Lewdness, the Appetites of the Audience were so debauch'd, that they would have judged the Entertainment insipid.* So that here's a fair Confession, that the Stage promoted and encourag'd the Corruption of Manners. But then being sorry that he has done his Friends this diskindness, he makes them amends, and concludes this Paragraph thus, *That 'tis evident that the Corruption of the Nation is so far from proceeding from the Play-house, that it partly proceeds from having no Plays at all.*

—Rifum teneatis amici.

His fourth Argument is, ‘ That the Stage can’t not possibly encourage or encline Men to Drunkenness, Gaming and Unnatural Sins, and that the Love of Women is fomented by the Corruption, and not by the Genuine Art of the Stage †.

To prove this Argument, he alledges, That Drunkards are always rendred Odious and Ridiculous by the Stage, Gamblers are never shewn there, but either as Fools or Rascals, and that of those four Reigning Vices, the Stage only Encourages Love to Women, which is the least, the least Contagious, and least Universal, and is a Check upon the other three; and particularly upon Unnatural Lust, which is the most destructive to the Happiness of Mankind *.

I answer in the first place, that Mr. Dennis's Argument and his Topicks to prove it, are founded meerly on his own Authority: and in the next place, that here, as elsewhere he is guilty of Contradictions.

* Page 25,
26, 27.

traditions.—*The Stage* (he says) does not incourage the Corruption of Manners; and yet owns it incourages the Love of Women.—Then again, *That the Love of Women is least Contagious*; — and yet owns [pag. 26.] *That it has more of Nature, and consequently more Tentation.*—So that his Arguments like *Cadmus's Earth-born-men* [in *Ovid*] fall foul upon and destroy one another.

But for a further Answer, I must tell him, that those Sins have generally a Dependance, and are mutually productive of one another; and the Theatre being the Common Rendevouz of lew'd Company, the Contagion spreads, and they are frequently infected with one anothers Crimes.

Our Author hath own'd that the Theatre incourages the Love of Women; and *Ovid* who was a very good Judge in the Matter, tells us, that *Venus* inclines Men to Idleness, Gaming and Quaffing, or at least that those Vices are usually Companions.

*Quam platanus rivo gaudet, quam populus uida,
Et quam Limosa canna palustris humo
Tam Venus Otia amat, qui finem queris Amoris,
Cedat Amor rebus, res age tutus eris,
Languor & immodici sub nullo vindice Somni,
Aleaq; & multo tempora quassa mero
Eripiant omnes animo sine vulnere vires,
Afflit incautis desidiosus Amor.*

De Remedio Amoris. Lib. I.

* *Athenaeus.*

If we may believe Historians, Stage-Plays were first devised by a parcel of Drunken Grecians in Honour of *Bacchus**, to whom they were consecrated †, and hence Tertullian calls the Theatre, *Quæst.* The *Quest.* 107.

Diplosoph.

Lib. 2. c. 1.

+ *Plutarch.*

Roman.

Quæst.

**De spectac.* The Temple of Bacchus *. *Salvian* joyns the c. 11. Roman Stage, their Epicurism and their Drunken-

^{† Hom. 62.} ^{ad Pop.} ^{Antioche-} nes together, as mutually producing one another. — The Roman Emperors, *Caligula*, *Heliogabalus*, *Nero*, *Commodus*, *Galienus*, and others who delighted most in the Stage, were the most Debauch'd, Luxurious and Drunken of all others, as may be seen in *Suetonius*.

* *Plutarch.*
de Gloria
Athenien-
sium &
Sympo. lib. 7

Riotous Feasts, on purpose to draw Men on to more Intemperance and Drunkenness *. Thus we see that Drunkenness was both the Parent and Off-spring of the Antient Stage; nor can our Author give us an instance, that our Modern Theatres have reformed those that frequent them, from Gaming and Drunkenness.

The Author of *The Third Blast of Retreat from Plays*, complains, That in his Time, the Actors and Play-haunters were the greatest Frequenters of Taverns, Ale-houses, Brandy-shops, &c, and mighty Quaffers, Health-Drinkers and Epicurers, that 'twas their usual Practice to haunt the Play-house, the Bawdy-house and Publick-houses by turns, and to go from the one to the other, and that the Play-house was the common Place where their Riotous Meetings at Taverns were appointed, and the Reason he gives of it is this, because Drunkenness, Epicurism, Luxury and Profusenes were Rhetorically applauded on the Stage, and set off with the highest Encoumiers; and those who spent their Estates this way, were dignified by the Poets, with the Title of Brave, Generous, Liberal and Jovial Sparks; as *Juvenal* expresses it:

*Hæc tamen illi
Omnia cum faciant bilares nitidiq; vocantur.*

Satyr II.

As to Mr. Dennis's seeming to think uncleanness a less Sin than Gaming, and that the Love of Women encouraged by the Stage is a good Preservative against Sodomy, it's ridiculous. To allow one sin to prevent another, is Play-house Divinity, and to advance that the inflaming of Lust is a proper way to prevent it's exerting it self upon unnatural Objects is an odd kind of Philosophy.

If the Play-house have this Effect now, its more than it had formerly, when we find that the profligate Custom of Men, and Womens putting one anothers Apparel promiscuously on the Stage, was a mighty incentive to that sort of Villany.

Sophocles the famous Greek Tragedian, whom Mr. Dennis calls Divine, is accused by Athæneus †; Plutarch * and many other Authors for this Impiety. St. Cyprian charges the same upon the Pantomimes and Players of his time in his 3d Epistle to Donatus, where he expresses it thus, *Libidinibus insanis in viros, viri proruunt, &c.* St. Chrysostom brings the same Accusation against the Stage in his time in his 12th Homily on the 1st Epistle to the *Corinthians*, where he says, The Theatres gather together Troops of Harlots, and Boys turn'd Ganymeds, who offer Violence to Nature it self. And that our English Stage has not been free of this horrid Crime, we are inform'd by Mr. Stubbs, in his Anatomy of Abuses †, where he affirms, that Players, and those that frequent the Stage, play'd the Sodomite in their secret Conclaves.

+ Athæneus
Dipnoi. l. 13.
* Plutarch.
Amar.

+ Pag. 109.

Mr. Dennis in his 4th Chapter pretends to answer Mr. Collier's Objections from Authority. His Exceptions as to most of 'em I have already taken notice of in my Answer to the Reviewer, and therefore shall only Answer what Mr. Dennis has advanc'd that is new; and the first is, that the Stage is of admirable advantage to Learning, and that the Theatre is certainly the best School in the World for History, Poetry and
 † P. 35, 36. Eloquence †.

Enough has been said already to prove that it can be of no solid advantage to Learning; for when Mens Minds are infected with Vice, they are not fit for any profitable or generous Study, as appears by Seneca's Complaint, that the Stage diverted the People from attending on his Philosophical Lectures. As to History, the falsehood of the Assertion is plain; for we may learn more of that by reading the Greek, Roman, and other Historians, than by all the Plays that have ever been writ, which for a mangled scrap now and then of true History, have ten times more of Fable.

Then as to the point of Eloquence: We have Quintilian the famous Orator against him, who in his Directions, How an Orator should frame his Speech, Voice and Gesture, enjoins frequent declaiming, and the often repeating of Eloquent Orations, but expressly forbids him, ' to imitate ' Players or the Custom of the Stage, or to ' express or act the Slaves, the Drunkards, Lovers ' or any such Play-house part, because they were ' no ways necessary for an Orator, but would ra- ' ther corrupt his Mind and Manners than any way help his Elocution or Action *. And I would very fain know of Mr. Dennis, which of all the Admirers of the Stage can be compar'd for Eloquence to St. Chrysostom, Tertullian, St. Jerom, and the rest of the Fathers that never frequented the Stage but wrote against it. But

* *Instit. Orat.*
 l. I. c. 18, 19

But granting it to be true, that the Theatre promoted Eloquence, we may very well say with St. Jerom, *Melius est aliquid Nescire, quam cum periculo discere* *. Better never learn it, than * Epist. 22. run such a risk for it. Besides, an Orator ought c. 13. to be Grave and Serious, whereas the Stage is Light, Wanton and Lewd. If Cicero that great Master of Eloquence had thought the Stage necessary for promoting that desirable Attainment, or had he ow'd his Formation to it, in so great a measure, as Mr. Dennis says he did *, certainly * Page 36. he would never have been so much an Enemy to Eloquence or so ungrateful to the School, whence he learn'd it himself, as to advise the Romans to abandon it, *lest it should render them Effeminate and Corrupt, and so overturn their Empire, as it had done that of the Greeks* *, he would rather * *Tusculan Quæst. l. 4.* have advis'd the Reforming of it, as Mr. Dennis does, but that he saw 'twas impracticable, and would turn to as little account as Plowing the Sand : Nor can he ever prove, that Demosthenes acquir'd his Oratory by frequenting the Stage. Plutarch tells us he repeated his Speeches before a large Looking-Glaſs to regulate his Gestures. But admitting once for all, that there's a great deal of Eloquence, Wit, Invention, History and other parts of Learning in Stage-Plays, there's so much Obscenity, Scurrility and Lewdness mix'd with it, that it only serves as a Tincture of Sugar or a Glaſs of Cordial to convey a venomous Potion, and the stronger the Wine, or the better the Conſerves that are temper'd with the Poifon, the more effectually and indiſcernibly it kills. ——

' For (as Tertullian says on this very Subject,) no
' Man mixes Poifon with Gall and Hellebore, but
' with the sweetest, most savory and best relishing
' Ingredients. —— Therefore (says he) look
upon

upon those strong Lines, those moral Sentences
 those pompous Expressions, and witty Sayings
 as Honey distilling from a poisnous Limbeck,
 and don't let the Pleasure of your Palate betray
^{#De spe&ac} you to the endangering your Lives †.

c. 27.

I shall conclude this Point with the pertinent Expression of *Salvian* on the same Subject. — Stage-Poets (*says he*) have rather damned than illustrated their Wits and Parts.

Mr. Dennis alledges [pag. 36.] that before *Thespis* appeared in *Attica*, and reduc'd the *Drama* to some sort of Form, they had neither Author nor Knowledge among them that could be esteemed by Posterity, which is notoriously False; For *Thales* who is reckond the first of the 7 Wisemen of *Greece* was before him; and *Solon* another of them, who is justly accounted the wisest of the Antient Greek Legislators, after having seen one of his Tragedies, oppos'd him to his Face, forbade him Acting any more, upbraided him for the Lies utter'd in his Play; and told him if his *Drama* were approv'd, they should quickly find Lying and Cheating in their Contracts and Bargains, as has been noted already; so that here the Stage was nipp'd in the bud, and yet I must tell our Author, that it was not then manag'd in so lew'd a manner as it is now (tho' bad enough it seems to be censur'd by *Solon*) for *Diogenes Laertius* informs us, "That Tragedy was then carried on by a Set of Musicians, who sung Hymns in the Praife of *Bacchus* (which confirms what I have already said, That the Stage had a Drunken Original) and then betwixt those Hymns *Thespis* Introduc'd an Actor, who repeated some Discourse on a Tragical Subject, and afterwards brought in Satyrs in open Charets, having their Faces daub'd with the Dreggs of Wine to resemble the high colour'd Visage of the Satyrs.

Mr.

Mr. Dennis had as good have forbore mentioning those Philosophers and Historians *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, *Aristotle*, &c. whom he calls the Wonders of all Posterity, for it will appear from what has been said of them already under the Head of Philosophers against the Stage that most of them disproved it, ev'n *Socrates* himself who he says, first began to form their Manners out of the Theatre.

As to his Objection of some of them having writ Tragedies, its nothing to his Purpose; It's very well known, that Tragedies were then repeated for the Instruction of the Audience, but not acted with profane and villainous Gestures to corrupt the Morals of the Spectators ; and thus the Comedies and Tragedies of the Antients, such as *Sophocles*, *Euripides*, *Æschylus*, *Menander*, *Seneca*, and others were read by the Poets themselves, or some that they appointed, it being accounted a disgrace for the Authors to have them acted in Stage-Plays, as appears plainly by that of *Horace*,

*An tua demens
Vilibus in Ludis dictari carmina malis?*

Serm. L. I. § 10.

Diodorus Siculus *, *Quintillian* †, and others testifie the same, which is quite another thing than Acting of Plays, there being no Body against Writing a Poem in Nature of a Tragedy or Poetical Dialogue, with several Acts and Parts to add Life and Lustre to it. — Thus *Apolinaris* the Elder, when he was forbid Preaching by *Julian* the Apostate, or to educate Christian Youth in Learning and Poetry, compos'd diverse Tragedies in Imitation of *Euripides*, and Comedies in Imitation of *Menander* and *Pindarus*, consisting only

* Bib. Hist.
l. 14. § 110.
† De Orator.
Dia. 1, 6, 14.

of Divine Arguments and Scripture Stories, by which he instructed those to whom he could not have Liberty to Preach.— Thus about the time of the Reformation here in *England* several good Christians, propagated the Protestant Doctrine under the Veil of Dialogues by way of Comedy and Tragedy, insomuch that the Popish Clergy got them forbidden by the 34 and 35 of *Henry 8.*

c. i. The famous *Du Plessis Mornay*, writ a Tragedy of *Jeptha's Daughter*: The great Poet *Buchanan* did the like; he wrote also another call'd *Baptistes*, and translated into Latin the *Medea* and *Alcestis* of *Euripides*, but it will not therefore follow that those great Men approv'd the Stage. *Buchanan* in his Dedication of *Alcestis* to *Margaret of France* Sister of *Henry II.* recommends that Tragedy to her, because there is no mention in it of Parricid, Witchcraft or other Crimes with which Tragedians, commonly abound; so that by this he rather Censures than approves the Theatre.

Our Author's Assertion, 'That the Stage was established in Queen *Elizabeths* Time, and flourished in that of K. *James*, upon which *Spencer*, *Bacon* and *Raleigh*, three Prodigies of Wit, appear'd all at once, and that we had no first-rate Writer till *Henry VIII.* is like the rest of his Learning and Confidence. It was so far from being established in Queen *Elizabeths* Time, tho' it had then but too much Incouragement, that all the Play-houses in *London* were suppressed upon a Petition to that Queen in 1580. — The Stage was restrained by the 14th and 39th of her Reign, and Books against it, there dedicated to her Secretary *Walsingham*, and it was so far from flourishing in King *James I.* time, that in the 1st Year of his Reign, Stage-Players were by Act of Parliament declared Rogues and Vagabonds, &c. as

as has been already said under the Head of *The English State against the Stage*.

As to the Learning of *Bacon* and *Raleigh*, it surpasses Mr. *Dennis's* Skill to prove that it was any way owing to the Stage, and indeed according to his solid way of Writing, he owns as much himself, when he says, immediately upon the Establishment of the *Drama*, those three Prodigies of Wit appear'd.

And I must likewise observe, That *Bacon* and *Raleigh* (as he calls them) employed themselves in more generous and manly Studies, than any the Stage can boast of, as appears by the Learned Works they have left behind them.

As to the other part of his Assertion, that we had no first-rate Writer on any Subject before *Henry VIII.* it's an injury to the Nation, and a proof of his own Assurance and Ignorance. To name but a few.

What does he say to *Rog.Bacon* who liv'd in the 13th Centry, and for his skill in the Mathematicks, was esteemed a Conjurer, and summoned to appear at *Rome* on that account, where he cleared himself and was sent back again. To go a little higher.

What does he think of the Venerable *Bede*, who liv'd in the beginning of the 8th Century, from the Birth of Christ, to whose time *Bale* reckons but 79 British Writers? Did he never hear of Sir *Thomas Littleton*, the Oracle of the Law, who liv'd in the Reign of *Henry VI.* of *Braclon* or *Fortescue*? But because I will trouble my Reader with no more, I would advise Mr. *Dennis* to turn over *Bale's* Centuries of English Writers, and there he will find his bold Assertion to be shamefully False: For in the 8th Century; that Author

reckons 18 more Writers besides *Bede*, 7 in the 9th, 14 in the 10th, 18 in the 11th, 87 in the 12th, amongst whom were 6 of the *Decem. Angliae Scriptores*; 123 in the 13th, 244 in the 14th, 137 in the 15th; and from thence to the Year 1557. but 137 more. Not that these were all First-rate Writers, but it is sufficient to shew, that the State of Learning was not so low in *England* as Mr. Dennis would represent it to have been: And that the increase and decrease of Learning, has no dependency on the Stage; all that our Plays can pretend to teach, being only some scraps of Rhetorick and History, which may be much better learn'd elsewhere.

The Reflections which he casts on the Parliament times when the Stage was abolish'd, are full of Malice and Ignorance. No Man can expect that Learning should flourish during an Intestine War, yet those Times were not without Eminent Scholars in all Faculties; and upon Enquiry it will be found, that most of the great Men *England* can boast of, laid the Foundation of their Studies, and formed their Thoughts before the Stage was restored by King *Charles II*. The World cannot deny, but *Selden* and *Milton* were famous for Learning, tho' they were of the Parliaments side, & ow'd nothing of their Education to the Stage. Nor can our Author pretend, that the Lord Chief Justice *Hales*, or the Beginners of the Royal Society, the Doctors, *Ward*, *Wilkins*, *Wallis*, &c. or the famous Mr. *Boyle*, were any thing indebted to the Theatre for their great Learning.

The slovenly Reflection he casts on the Divines of those times, sufficiently discovers, that he's but sorriely read in Divinity.

The Doctors, *Calamy*, *Care* and *Manton* (whom he mentions with so much Contempt,) are approv'd by better Judges than any that writes for the

the Theatre, the good acceptance which the latter's Volumes of Sermons have met with from the Publick have sufficiently proclaimed their Value ; and if our Author had a little bethought himself, — the great Arch-bishop *Usher* flourished in those times, who was no Friend to the Stage ; The most Learned Bishop of *Worcester*, whom he forgets to mention, was well advanc'd in his Studies, and had given sufficient proof of his Extraordinary Abilities, before the Revival of the Stage ; and I dare boldly aver, that the Theatre afforded him none of those Learned Arguments, by which of late he hath baffled the Deists and Socinians. The Bishop of *Salisbury*, whose Learning has made him famous, owes his Education to a Country where the Stage never took root. — The late Arch-bishop *Tillotson* ow'd nothing of his great Endowments to the Theatre : And I Question whether Mr. *Lock* and Mr. *Newton*, whose Learning he mentions with deserved applause, will give it under their Hands, that they have had any Benefit by it. — This Venemous Reflection, *That none were encourag'd in the Parliament times, but Hypocritical Fools, whose abominable Canting was Christned Gift, and their Dulness Grace* *, is no Scandal from the * Page 42. Pen of an Ignorant Libertine.

It's very well known, that some of them that are yet alive, such as Dr. *Bates*, Mr. *How*, Mr. *Alsop*, &c. are in general esteem by the Learned Men of all Sides ; the two former were particularly respected by the late Arch-bishop *Tillotson* for their great Learning and Worth ; and the latter is sufficiently known to the World for the Accuteness of his Pen, his admirable Talent of Preaching and Universal Learning.

It's needless to mention Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Baxter*, Mr. *Charnock* and Mr. *Pool* deceased ; and I had

almost forgot to mention the *Poly-Glot*, a Laborious and Learned Work, the Birth of which is owing to those times.

In a word : The Reflection is so malicious and ill grounded, that nothing can justifie my insisting so much upon it, but that it was necessary to *Answer a Fool according to his Folly, lest he should be wise in his own Conceit.*

I come now to his Second Part.

Where in the first Chapter he asserts with his usual Confidence, 'That the Stage is useful to the Government ; which if true, the Antient Greeks and Romans, who understood Government the best of any People in the Gentile World, were very much in the wrong when they banished the Stage by the Decree of the State (as has been already mentioned) and the Government of *England* were mightily out in their Measures in the time of King *James* and *Charles I.* when by Act of Parliament Stage-Players were declared Rogues and Vagabonds.

If the Stage be such a Sovereign Remedy against Ambition and the Immoderate Love of Pleasure, as Mr. *Dennis* would have it †, what unlucky Stars were they that marr'd its Influence, and prevented its curing of *Julius Cesar*, *Nero* and others of old, and three of our own successive Kings of late; who encouraged and frequented it more than any of their Predecessors ? How came the Jews to be so foully mistaken, as to think that the Stage would over-turn their Constitution, as I have already prov'd from *Josephus*, or did old *Samuel's* Spirit of Prophecy forsake him when he recommended the perusal of the Law of God to the Kings of *Israel*, as the properest Method to keep them steady in their Ad-
Dex. 17. 13. ministration † : Had there been such Poets amongst them

them in those days, who (as Mr. Dennis has it) are sometimes by a Spirit, not their own, exalted to Divinity *. They would have prescribed Tragedy, as the best Remedy against their inconsiderate Ambition and immoderate love of pleasure †. * Pag. 44. † Pag. 52.

' Nothing, says Mr. Dennis, is more capable
 ' than Tragedy, of raising the Soul, and giving it
 ' that Greatness, that Courage, that Force, and that
 ' Constancy, which are the Qualifications that
 ' make men deserve to command others; which
 ' is evident from Experience. For they who in
 ' all Countries, and in all Ages, have appeared
 ' most to feel the power of Tragedy, have been
 ' the most deserving, and the greatest of Men.
 ' *Aeschylus* among the Athenians was a great Captain and Tragick Poet. *Sophocles* an able Statesman, and a victorious General. The very greatest among the Romans were so far touch'd with the Drama, as either to write their Plays themselves, or to build their Theatres; witness *Scipio*, *Lelius*, *Lucullus*, *Mecenas*, *Julius* and *Augustus*. None among the French has shew'd so much greatness of Mind as *Richlieu*; and none so much passion for the Drama, which was so great, that he writ several Plays with that very hand which at the same time was laying the Plan of the French Universal Monarchy.

This is one of Mr. Dennis's raptures, when exalted to Divinity, which inspir'd his Pen with irresistible Arguments: But I am afraid his Divinity is not of the right stamp; for had he look'd into the Divine Records, he would have found that *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Jephthah*, *Samson*, *David* and others have far out-done all that he has nam'd, for greatness of Courage, and qualifications for Government, and yet never one of them saw a Tragedy. *Hunniades*, *Scanderbeg*, *Tamerlan*, *Zisca*, *Gustavus Adolphus*, were equal for Valour to any

of his great Samplars, and yet not one of 'em were inspir'd by the Stage. Then for the mighty Richlieu, he was so far over-match'd by his own Contemporary, *Oliver* the Stage-hater, that for all the Courage of his Tragical Pen, he could not save himself nor his Country from trembling, when the Usurper Roar'd. Nor was the Theatre able to cure his own Ambition: But notwithstanding Mr. Dennis's *probatum est*, with the same Hand that he wrote his Plays, he laid the foundation of the hatefulllest Tyranny that *Europe* hath known for several Ages. I must also make bold to tell Mr. Dennis, that the countenance given to the Stage by *Julius Cæsar*, *Pompey*, and other aspiring Romans, seems rather to have been the effect of their Ambition, than propos'd as a cure for it, that by immersing the people in Debau-chery and Pleasures, they should be render'd the less careful of their Expiring Liberties, which the Senate being aware of, thought fit whilst they had any power left them, to cashier the Stage; and this being the Opinion of the State, is more to be regarded than that of any particular person how great soever. It's likewise worthy of our obser-vation, that *Augustus* himself, and several other Emperours who favour'd the Stage, were forc'd to discharge it at last as a Nursery of Lewdness and Villany. *Scipio Nasica* a great General, who by Vote of the Senate was declar'd the best Man of the Common-wealth, because of his extraordi-nary Valour, Prudence and Morality, suppress'd the Stage as destructive to the Morals of the People. *Trajan*, who if *Pliny* may be credited, was one of the best Roman Emperours, did the like: And the Emperour *Alexander Severus*, who was none of the worst of them, withdrew the Pensions of the Players; so that all that were great among the Romans, were far from favouring the Stage.

The

The Influence which Mr. Dennis ascribes to the Stage, in preventing Rebellions amongst the People †, is equally ridiculous with his other † Page 56. Propositions. It's but a few of the People at best, who have either time, opportunity or money to frequent the Theatre; so that by necessary consequence its Influence can never be universal; but besides, he is contradicted by matter of fact, the Incouragement given to the Stage here in *England*, could neither prevent the opposition made by the Parliament and People to *Charles the Ist*, nor the Plots of the Papists against *Charles the IId.* nor the Revolt of the Nation from the last K. *James*. The Stage in *France* could not prevent the Rebellion against *Lewis XIV* during his Minority; and it's remarkable, that the Protestants of that Kingdom, who have declar'd against the Theatre in a National Council, as before mentioned, were his firmest Friends.

It's pleasant to read how this Stage Panegyrist will in spite of History and common Sense ascribe all the Great things done by the Greeks and Romans to the Influence of the Stage †, when tp. 59, &c. the States of both condemned them, as occasioning a dissolution of Manners, which render'd them unfit either to defend themselves, or to conquer others. And *Themistocles* in particular, who is one of the Generals he mentions, had so low an Opinion of the Theatre, that he made a Law against Magistrates frequenting it, lest the Common-wealth should seem to play and loiter in the Stage †. *Pericles*, another of them, who was joint Pretor with *Sophocles*, rebuk'd his Companion for beholding and commending a beautiful Boy, telling him that wanton looks did not become a Pretor *; what would he have said then of the Modern Stage? Our Author has forgot to mention *Alexander the Great*, the Discipline and Apparel

*Plutarch
in Vita The-
misti.*

* *Jo. Sarist.
Nug. Cunal.
lib. I. cap. 8.*

Apparel, of whose Army smelt nothing at all of the gawdy and lascivious Theatre, and yet his Conquests exceeded all those of the other Greek Captains he hath nam'd.

Then as to his Roman Instances, *Scipio Africanus* was so far from approving the Follies of the Stage, that he pitied the Common-wealth, as drawing near its Ruine, when he saw the Children of the Nobility bred up to Dancing, and singing to the praise of Stage-Players, which their Ancestors reckon'd disgraceful †; and therefore his building, or rather advising a sort of Reform as to the Seats of the Theatre, to distinguish the Senators from the People, seems rather to have proceeded from a Compliance with Custom, and a design to humour the Times, than from his approbation of Stage-Plays. Besides, there's no man acquainted with Roman History, but must needs know that their Theatres were applied to other uses, as publick Orations, and the Execution of Malefactors; so that the Efecting of a Theatre, will not always infer the approbation of the Drama.

Pompey indeed built a Theatre of Stone after the former had been destroyed by *Scipio Nasica*, and to prevent its being demolish'd by the Censors in time to come, Erected a Temple of *Venus* on the top of it, which was no great proof that it was designed for a Reformation of Manners; and this the Senate was so sensible of, that they blam'd *Pompey* for Building his Theatre, as I have said already.

Mr. *Dennis* in the same ridiculous manner ascribes the Union of the French, and their Conquests to the Influence of the Drama, and the loss of their Conquests to the ceasing of the spirit of Dramatick Poetry among 'em before the beginning of the last War †.

† p. 61.

But

† *Salust.*
Saturnal.
lib. 3.

But if he would be pleased to look back to the Time of Charlemaine, who was a Mortal Enemy to the Stage, he will find that France extended her Conquests a great deal further then, under his Conduct, than she has done by the Influence of the *Drama* under Lewis XIV. and kept them longer too : And I would pray him to observe, that our own Glorious Sovereign King William, who hath oblig'd the French to resign their Conquests, is no great Admirer of the Stage ; so that it's something else than the *Drama* that hath given him the Ascendant over France. And the World must own that his Courage and Conduct, and Qualifications for Government are equal to any of those whom Mr. Dennis has mentioned, as the great Patrons of the Theatre.

In his Second Chapter *, he would perfwade *From p.63
the World, ' That the Stage is particularly use- to 68.
' ful to the English and especially the present Go-
' vernment, because the English are more prone to
' Rebellion than any People upon the Face of the
' Earth ; and that we have been longer at quiet
' since the flourishing of the *Drama*, than at any
' time before since the Conquest ; and that the
' Civil War was begun by those that were Ene-
' mies to the Stage. — So much for its
Usefulness to the English in general.

Then he proves its Usefulness to this Govern-
ment in particular, ' Because some of its Friends
' would prove averse to it, if the Stage were
' either suppress'd or very much discouraged, and
' that it diverts the Enemies of the Government,
' hinders their Plotting, and frequenting Jacobite
' Conventicles.

Here's another piece of Civility to the Nation again ; *They are the greatest Rebels on Earth* according to him ; but this I have answer'd already. That we have had more Peace since the flouri-
shing

fling of the *Drama*, than at any time since the Conquest is false. It cannot be said to have flourished but since the Restoration of *Charles II.* For it was restrained in Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, by Act of Parliament, and banished the City of *London*, (as has been already said) yet her's was a Long and a Peaceable Reign.

Stage-Players were condemned as Rogues in that of King *James*, yet we had Peace all his time. — But the unanswerable Argument is this, Those that rebell'd against *Charles I.* were Enemies to the Stage: But if Mr. *Dennis* will be pleased to look back, he will find I have prov'd, That the Incendiaries and Fomenters of the Civil War, were the Friends of the Stage, who taught Rebellion against our Constitution, set the King above all Laws, and would have trod Parliaments under foot, who are two thirds of our Government, if the two States of Lords and Commons may be allowed that Name. But if this will not do, what will Mr. *Dennis* reply, if I tell him, that those very Men who were Enemies to the Stage, or at least their Successors in Principle and Practice, who abhor the Tyranny of *41*, as much as Mr. *Dennis* abhors the Rebellion on't, are the firmest Friends this Government has: And here I'll venture to say once for all, That it's very dangerous to our present Establishment to have the Theatre manag'd by such kind of Persons as our Author and others, who exclaim with so much Malice and Ignorance against those very Maxims, which contributed to the Happy Revolution; for if resisting or dethroning a Prince be in no case Lawful, which is the common Theme and known Principle of most of the Libellers against *41*, it will by necessary Consequence, condemn the Revolution of 1688. So very useful are some of

of the late Advocates and Authors for the Stage to the present Government (I will not say all that have writ Plays) for I know that Mr. Tate, and some others, whose Parts deserve a better Employment, are Persons of Generous English Principles.

Our Authors Inſinuation, that the Suppreſſion or Discouraging of the Stage, would create an Averſion in any of the Friends of the Government to the preſent Conſtitution, is ſo very filly, that certainly he muſt be aʃamed of it himſelf upon ſecond Thoughts. —— Does he think that a Prince of ſuch Courage and Bravery as ours, puts any Value upon the Friendſhip or Enmity of a parcel of Men, who have been declared Rogues and Vagabonds by the Statute, or that the Nation would any way reſent the overturning of the Stage, which never had any continued Footing nor ſettled Incouragement among us, but under the Reign of a Luxurious Prince, eſpecially conſidering how Inſtrumental it has been to the debauching of our Youth? Does he think that the People, who have look'd on with Satisfaction to ſee fev'ral of thoſe Non-jurant Bifhops turn'd out of their Sees, though once they ador'd them, when Petitioners againſt King James's Declaration, would beſtow one ſigh on the lew'd Stage, though it were firſt pull'd down, and then buil't up again, to make its own Funeral Pile. The contrary would be ſo true that thouſands of Hufbands, Parents and Masters, who have had their Wives, Children and Servants debauched by it, would gladly throw up their Hatts at ſuch a Bonfire, and lay ſuch a curse upon thoſe that ſhould ever attempt to erect another Stage, as Joshua laid upon the Re-builder of Jericho. The Nation is brought to a delicate paſſ indeed, when we muſt not talk of overturning the Stage, but a parcel

parcel of debauched Wits will threaten the Government.

If the Thing were worthy of His Majesties Notice, he might well answser in the Words of *Augustus*, formerly mentioned in the like case, *That he had been powerful enough to make his Enemies stoop, and is he not able now to banish Festers and Fools.*

His next Insinuation, 'That it diverts the *Facobites*, and prevents their Plots and Conventicles, is equally absur'd: Let him but cast an Eye up to *Westminster-Hall*, or the City Gates, and there the Heads and Limbs of *Charnock, Perkins and Friend, &c.* will tell him to his Face that he's mistaken.

His Answers to the Objections from Authority, in the Third Chapter, I shall pass over, as having said enough on that Head already, in Answer to others. And as for his Pretence in the rest of his Book, to shew the Usefulness of the Stage to the Advancement of Religion, it's only a further proof of his Vanity and intollerable Confidence, seeing Fathers, Councils, and the best of Divines in all Ages have demonstrated the contrary; to their Arguments that I have quoted already, I refer him, and so bid him *Farewel.*

If he think that I have not used him with that Smoothness that he might have expected, let him remember how he treated the whole Nation as Splenetick Rebels, the Parliament of *England* in 1641. as Traitors, and all the Divines of those Times as Blockheads and Hypocrites.

C A P. XX.

The STAGE Encouraged by the Universities.

ICome next to consider the Encouragement given to the Stage by our Universities; which may also bear date from the Reign of King Charles I. for before that time, I find both of them had declared themselves against the Theatre.

Dr. Reynolds, in his Book Entituled, *The Overthrow of Stage-Plays* † affirms, ‘That the best ^{tp. 151, &c} and gravest Divines in the University of Oxford, condemned Stage-Plays by an express Statute in a full Convocation of the whole University in 1584. whereby the use of all Common-plays was expressly prohibited in the University, lest the younger sort who are prone to imitate all kinds of Vice, being Spectators of so many lewd and evil Sports, as in them are practised, should be corrupted by them.

And Mr. Prior informs us †, ‘That the University of Cambridge, enacted the like, That no ^{+ Hist. Majt.} Common Actors should be suffered to play within the Jurisdiction of the University, for fear they should deprave the Manners of the Scholars.

And whereas it was objected, that the Universities approved of Private Stage-Plays acted by Scholars in private Colledges; Dr. Reynolds answers in the Book above-mentioned, ‘That tho’ they conniv’d at them, yet they gave no publick approbation to them, that they were not receiv’d

' ceiv'd into all Colledges, but only practised in
 ' some private houses (perchance once in three or
 ' four years) and that by the particular Statutes
 ' of those Housles made in times of Popery, which
 ' require iome Latin Comedies for Learning sake,
 ' only to be acted now and then; and those Plays
 ' too were for the most part compos'd by idle
 ' persons, who did not affect better Studies; and
 ' they were aeted by such as preferr'd Vain-glory,
 ' Ostentation, and Strutting on the Stage be-
 ' fore Learning; or by such who were sent to
 ' the University, not so much to obtain Know-
 ' ledge, as to keep them from the common Rio-
 ' tous way of living; as Parents send little Chil-
 · dren to School to keep them out of harms way;
 ' and their Spectators for the most part were of
 ' the same sort, but the Graver, better and more
 ' studious persons, especially Divines, condemn'd
 ' them, censur'd them, and came not at them.

Thus we see that our Universities formerly condemn'd the Stage, and that they came afterwards to countenance them, must without doubt be ascribed to the Influence of K. Charles I. and A. Bishop Laud; for I find on Aug. the 30th. 1636. the Students of Christ-Church in Oxford presented a Tragi-comedy call'd, *The Royal Slave, to the K. and Queen*, which was afterwards presented again to Their Majesties at Hampton-Court; and the 2d. Edition Printed at Oxford, by William Turner in 1640. The Gentlemen of Trinity-Colledge in Cambridge did before that, viz. in 1634. present a Comedy to the King, call'd *Albumazar*, Printed at London by Nicholas Okes; upon both which I shall make some Remarks; and first upon *Al- bumazar*.

Remarks

out fitn. benidmorn svodis doo. edd. ni aewil
 zoldlupon svag veldy. mord is l. vining svil
 st. ion svil veldy. mord is l. vining svil
 b'vico'

Remarks upon the Universities Plays before
King Charles I.

The Poet values himself in the Prologue upon the Dignity of his Audience, but chiefly addresses himself to the Ladies, whose Beauties, he says, made the whole Assembly glad. Whether the Play was altogether so pure and chaste as became His Majesties presence, the Gravity of the University, and the Modesty of the Ladies we shall see afterwards; but this very hint of the Beauty of the Ladies cheering the hearts of the Assembly, will fall under our Saviours Reproof, of not looking upon a Woman to lust after her, and is the very thing for which St. Chrysostom declaims against Plays, as we have heard already. Nor can it be reconcileable to the purity of the Christian Religion, which hath set a Bar upon our very Looks, for Men and Women to haunt Play-houses in order to ogle one another, as the Stage-Poets themselves now express it.

Then for the Play it self.

The Dialogue betwixt *Albumazar*, *Harpax* and *Ronca*, where they applaud Theft and Robbery, as that which made the *Spartans* Valiant and *Arabia* Happy, and charge it on all Trades and Callings, tho' guilt with the smooth Title of Merchant, Lawyer or the like, could have no Natural Tendency to teach Moral Honesty. Whether it might have any design to justifie the after Practices of Levying Money without Consent of Parliament, Extorting Loan Money from Merchants and Tradesmen, as being only a better sort of Thieves; or to justifie Plundering the Country, as the Histories of those times say was very usual amongst the

King's Soldiers afterwards, I know not, but the Fable seems to carry some such Moral, and the Authority of an University would go a great way among Libertines; so that it could but be collected by the least *Innuendo*, tho' never so much wrested. *Albumazar's* insisting upon *Great Necessity*, as the Cardinal Virtue, and it being Printed too in *Italick*, would seem to strengthen the Conjecture, especially seeing he goes on to represent all Mankind as Thieves; and that the very Members of Man's Body are fram'd by Nature, so as to steal from one another, which is good enough Authority for the Head to steal from all the rest.

The 2d Scene, Containing a Discourse betwixt *Pandolfo*, an old Fellow of 60, in Love with *Flavia*, a Girl of 16, and *Cricca* his Servant, is far from being Chast. —— I cannot imagine what Edification it could afford to the Audience to hear an old Man insist upon his Vigor and Fitness for a young Girl, and his Servant on the other hand telling him, that one Nights Lodging would so much enfeeble him, as *Flavia* would make him a Cuckold. This seems more adapted to expose to Laughter the Dotage that old Age is now and then subject to, and to justifie the Disloyalty of a young Wife so Wedded, than to bewail or reprove such Folly on both sides,

It had been more becoming a Supream Magistrate to provide against such unsuitable Matches by wholsom Laws, than to have had them represented as the Subject of Mirth on a Stage; as it would have been more decent for an University to have given him such Counsel, than to divert him with such ridiculous Entertainment.

The

The Dialogue betwixt *Albumazar, Pandolfo* and *Cricca*, [about Astrology] is a meer Rhapsody of studied Nonsense, which looks very unlike the Practice of Christians, whose great Law-giver tells them, *They must be accountable for every idle Word.* Luke 18.30.

The Courtship betwixt *Trincalo* a Farmer, and *Armellina, Pandolfo's Maid*; — wherein *Trincalo compares himself to a lusty strong Ass*, and her to a *Wanton young Filly*, and that they should have a race of *Mules* if she were willing; is so very Coarse and throws so much Contempt upon the Country Farmers, who are so useful to the Nation, that it can neither be reconciled to the Maxims of Christianity nor Common Policy.

In short, the whole Comedy is far from having any thing of a tendency to Vertue in it, except Reflections upon the City, as not affording a Dozen of *Chast VIRGINS*, and the like on Sheriffs and Justices of Peace as *Cheating and Hectoring their Neighbours*, and representing *Country Gentlemen*, as minding nothing but *Wenching and Drinking*, and young *Gentlewomen* talking smuttily of their *Amours*, be virtuous Representations.

If it be said as usual, that those Vices are represented in order to make them be abhor'd, and the Guilty Persons ashamed of them, it is easie to Answer, That a Supream Magistrate is authoriz'd by God and the Laws of his Country, to punish those Vices by the Sword of Justice, which will be ten times more effectual,

tual, than making them the Subject of Diver-
sion on a Stage.

I come next to the *Royal Slave*, a Tragi-Co-
medy, presented to the King and Queen by the
Students of Christ-Church in Oxford.

The Prologue to the King and Queen is on
the *Representation of one of the Persian Magi,*
discovered in a Temple worshipping the Sun, and
at the sight of a new Majesty, he leaves the Altar
and addresseth himself to the Throne. What
Moral this can include, is hard to determine, ex-
cept it were that they had a mind to insinuate
that it was no Crime to Sacrifice Religion to the
Court, as too many of them attempted to do
in reality, when they embrac'd Doctrines, con-
trary to those of the Church of *England*, for
which some of them (as *Laud*, *Montague* and
others) were censur'd by the Parliament after-
wards.

In the Prologue to the University, there's a
Jerk at some that they call *Late damned Books*,
and which they hoped would inspire none of the
University with a harsh Opinion of the Play,
which they alledge was so innocent, that the
Little Ruff or *Careless* might be present at it,
without fear, and they valued themselves highly
upon the Presence of their Majesties, as giving
Life to the Performance, and the King's Servants
spoke much in the same manner, when they pre-
sented it before them at *Hampton Court*.

The first Act represents a parcel of *drunken*
Ephesian Captives, revelling in their Chains, and
calling for VVhores, but bidding their Goaler and
his

his Wife be sure that they did not suffer any of the *Young Students of the LAW* to forestal the Market. The Goaler too has a Jerk at the Custom of Singing Psalms at the Gallows. All which I humbly conceive was an Entertainment no way suited to the Royal Majesty of a King, nor to the modesty of a Queen: Nor was it any thing for the Credit of the Nation, that the Reins of Publick Discipline should be so far let loose as to suffer such Practices amongst the young Students of the Law, if that was the Moral of the Fable.

The Rape attempted afterwards upon the Persian Queen and her Ladies by those Ephesian Captives, and their lewd Discourses from time to time, was no very good Lesson, nor meet Entertainment for a Queen. And their bringing in the Persian Courtiers, yielding compleat Obedience to *Cratander*, a Mock-King for three Days, because *Arsamnes* their Prince commanded it, and at the same time divested himself of his Authority for that space, seems to teach the slavish Doctrine, so much then contended for by the Court, *that it was unlawful to resist the King or any, having his Commission under any Pretence whatsoever,* tho' he should ev'n overturn the Foundations of their Constitution, as here their Counterfeit *Arsamnes* did by making a Captive King of Persia.

Nay, and this Play too which they pretend was so fram'd as it could give no offence to the Gravity of the University or Clergy, represents *Atoffa* the Queen a little inclining to the Taint of an Unlawful Amour with *Cratander* the Three-Days-King, and him Entertaining it also, tho' at the same time he is their chief Pattern of Virtue.

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Indeed there's *Praxaspis*'s Saying in the Second Scene, that seemed to be a Satirical hint, (tho' I cannot think, considering the Temper of the Stage, that 'twas so design'd) *Viz.* that when one of the Ladies wondred that they had not chosen *Cratander* a Queen for Company, to impe his Reign. *Praxaspis* answer'd, That the Female Sex was too Imperious to Rule, and would do as much harm in a Kingdom, as a Monkey in a Glass-shop, move and remove till they had broken all. Had her then Majesty taken the hint and forborn meddling with Affairs of State, it's probable that Matters had not come to that fatal Exit they did, which is one Instance more to convince our Advocates of the Stage, that those who frequent and admire it most, are never reform'd by it.

I shall forbear any further Remarks upon those Plays, these being enough to make good the Charge, that our Universities have encouraged the Stage, which is so much the more Criminal in them, because they ought to instruct the Nation by their Example as well as their Learning. Methinks the Reverence they ow'd to the Antient Philosophers, Fathers and Councils, besides what our first Reformers, the Acts of Parliament and those of their own Convocations requir'd from them, should have restrained them. — But to the great Misfortune of the Nation, neither these nor any Consideration whatever, were able to prevail with them; so that the Universities became infected with the Contagion of the Stage, and they being the Nurseries of Officers for the Church and State it was no wonder, if the Infection spread from them, all over the Kingdom, especially being patroniz'd by the Court and *A. B. Laud*, and his Faction of the Church.

This

This encourag'd particular Students afterwards, such as *Barton Holyday* and *Gaspar Main* (both of Christ-Church, Oxford) to write Plays: The latter in his Comedy, call'd, *The Amorous VVar*, is so very foul and smutty that it may well deserve the Name of *down-right Lewdness*; but it's supposed he thought it Attonement sufficient to jerk at the City and Parliament, which he does there with abundance of more Malice than Wit.

Neither Time nor Room will now allow me to enquire into later Instances of the Theatres being Encourag'd by the Universities, but 'tis to be fear'd there's no great Reform amongst them, as to this matter, which I am the more inclin'd to believe by the following Prologue, which was spoke at a Musick-Act in the University of Cambridge, about two Years ago.

PROLOGUE.

TH E Doctors being always much inclin'd
To favor and instruct the Female kind,
Out of their wonted Goodness thought it meet,
The Ladies we in Mother-Tongue shou'd greet:
For surely *Cambridge* wou'd be much to blame,
To let 'em go no wiser than they came:
Whom Nature in so fine a Mould hath wrought,
So pliant and so yielding to be taught;
That in one Minute any Man may show,
And teach 'em all their Aged Mothers know.
Yet do whate'er you can, they'll have an itching
For further Knowledge, and some deeper Teaching:
Pity such pregnant Parts were not remov'd
To Colleges, and by some Helps improv'd.
Bless us! the Age would be extream discerning,
If all the Females too were big with Learning.

I'm

I'm sure our *Cambridge* Ladies know the Art,
 Can all the Learned Mystery impart ;
 When an old Book-learn'd Sybil, dry and lean,
 With hollow Eyes, long Phiz, and wither'd skin ;
 Whose every Tooth, but that of Colt, is gone,
 Can be caref's'd by vig'rous Twenty One ;
 And Joy to her blest Consort married be,
Anno Ætatis sue 63.

And then -- w'have a new trim'd Lady posted down,
 To front the Country, and oblige the Town ,
 Who, tho' a love to Learning she pretends,
 Yet I susipect, since here I lately saw
 Some of her well-dres'd Am'rous *Temple-Friends*,
 She follows not the Gospel but the Law.

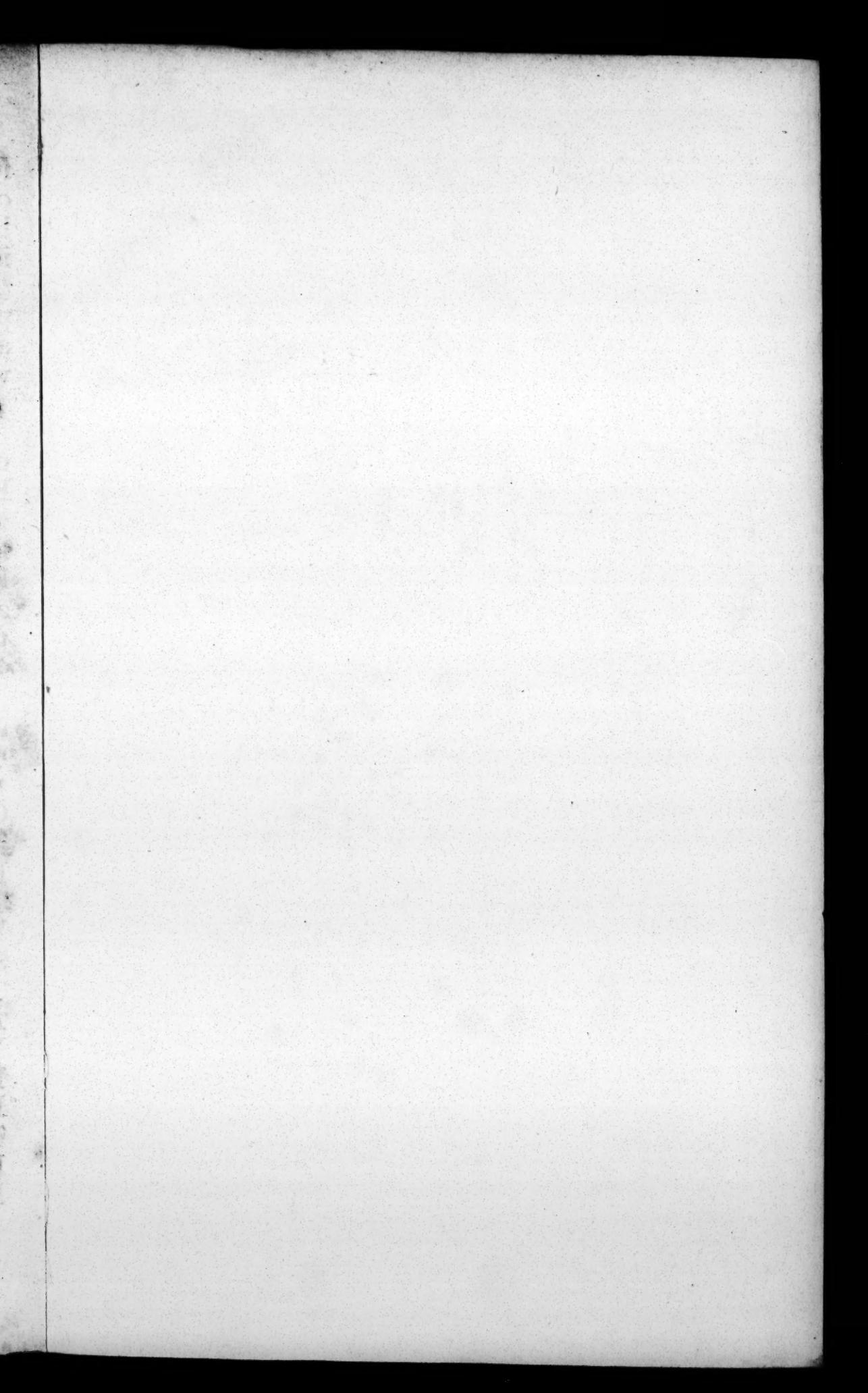
Bless'd *Cambridge* ! where 'tis hard to find a Maid,
 Except in some old Reveren'd Doctors Bed ;
 For they, good Men, to study much inclin'd,
 Among the Stars their Nightly pleasures find,
 Whilst they on *Virgo* all their hours bestow,
 The Wite continues Virgin still b—w.

Yet our Professors —————

(What pity 'tis such Follies shou'd miscarry ?
 Wou'd got an A^tt of Parliament to marry.
 How wou'd you like a Lover, who shou'd speak,
 And kiss, and figh and compliment in Greek ?
 From whose strong Loins shou'd spring great *Tau's*
 (and *Sigma's*,
 Black Princes, and a Noble Race of Pigmies.



FINIS.



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